Contributions by **Renée Kelly, Jessie Pope, Berta Ruck, T. C. Bridges, "Taffrail," etc.**

February

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DO DREAMS COME TRUE?
BY
RENEE KELLY
See Page 341

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Photo *Sport and General.*

To have horses and dogs of her own was a childish dream of Miss Renée Kelly, the charming young actress who plays so delightfully in *Daddy Long-Legs*. Turn to page 319, where Miss Kelly confesses some of her other day-dreams and poses in a series of delightful photographs.

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Pho *Flora Nevins.*

Miss Renée Kelly is a great believer in day-dreams, and as a child indulged in all sorts of delightfu journeys to the land of "make-believe."

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DO DREAMS COME TRUE?

BY

Renée Kelly.

Photo *Elvin Neame.*

Some of Miss Kelly's dreams have not yet come true, but she still clings to them and hopes for the day when they, too, may blossom into realities.

Most people at some time or other indulge in day-dreams. Sometimes they come true; very often they do not. In the following article Miss Renée Kelly, the beautiful young actress who plays so charmingly as the heroine in *Daddy Long-Legs* at the Duke of York's Theatre, compares her childish dreams with the sterner realities of later life.

DAY-DREAMS are the heritage of youth, and I think perhaps I had more than my share, for I was an incorrigible little day-dreamer in the days when hair-bows and lesson books were still my appointed lot. Someone has said somewhere that by perpetual concentration one can will any wish to come true. If that were the case my childish path would have been paved with chocolates, for I often concentrated my entire thoughts on sweet-stuff, with no other result than a bad mark for being absent-minded in class.

You've no idea, unless you are a day-dreamy person yourself, how tempting it was to let my thoughts slip away from the multiplication table to the land of "make-believe" which I had created in my own fancy. My day-dream forest was a wonderful place, where it never rained anything but lemonade, and the houses were all made of jelly, roofed with pink and white ice-cream.

I was not fond of arithmetic—I confess it frankly—and as our turns came in alphabetical order, and my initial was "R," I considered it was only necessary to learn the end of the multiplication tables. But one day my sins found me out. Deep in my day-dreams, I failed to notice that three of my class-mates were absent, and having calculated that my question would be "Twelve times nine?" I answered glibly "One hundred and eight!" only to discover that my teacher had demanded "Twelve times six." Thus my plan of campaign stood revealed, and I spent a hot afternoon, not amidst the fairy forest of my magic kingdom, but in a stuffy schoolroom, poring over the multiplication table.

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Fruit-farming and gardening once tempted Miss Kelly as a profession, and——

Photo Elwin Neame.

—— she also cherished hopes of doing great things in golf, while as a schoolgirl she was smitten with a temporary enthusiasm for nursing.

My first serious dream was when I was at school during the Boer War. Like all the seniors I succumbed to the "first-aid" fever, and fretted terribly because I was too young to emulate Florence Nightingale. Our conversation simply teemed with compound fractures, clinical thermometers, and artificial respiration, and we made life a burden to our families by our enthusiasm in the matter of bandaging.

I don't mind owning that in those days it was the picturesque side of nursing that attracted me most. I never gave a thought to the self-denial and hard work exacted by one of the most arduous—and most noble—professions in the world. I simply saw myself flitting from bed to bed like a ministering angel, in a becoming uniform, soothing wounded warriors in the most approved style. I even designed a special cap, which should display nurses' hair to the best advantage, for I am afraid that I cherished the illusion that a nurse's first duty was to be decorative rather than efficient.

Perhaps, on the whole, I was not a very great loss to the nursing profession, for I have a tendency to get away from my worries by going off into the country, and the Matron might have been upset if I had absconded in the midst of a critical operation, or left a patient with the thermometer in his mouth for an hour on end. They say Matrons are *very* strict, though my only experience is Mrs. Lippett, the Matron of the John Grier Home in *Daddy Long-Legs*.

I think it was my love of fresh air and outdoor life that imbued me with a temporary ambition to be

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a lady gardener or go in for fruit-farming. I thought it would be so glorious to potter about among roses and fruit trees all day, dressed in a cool linen frock and shady hat. How I was to obtain the broad acres I planned to cultivate never entered my head, and I am afraid I expected flowers and fruit to emerge from the ground with the mysterious ease of rabbits from a conjuror's hat.

Happily, a fruit-farming friend in California nipped my agricultural ambitions in the bud, with disenchanting facts regarding early hours and hard work. Fruit-farming, it seemed, was not all lilac frocks and oranges, like a scene out of a musical comedy—it had its unpleasant side, too, which included an intimate acquaintance with weeds and slugs, and frequent soiling of one's hands and raiment. That settled it as far as I was concerned, for I do hate getting into a mess, and I should have wanted a permanent body-guard armed with sponges and towels to remove the grime.

I went on to the stage soon after I left school, at the age of fifteen, and, of course, like all embryo actresses, I longed to play Rosalind and Juliet. Even as a schoolgirl I had yearned to exchange blue serge and plimsols for a leather jerkin and high boots, and a leaf-green cap with a rakish Robin Hood air. Juliet did not appeal to me quite so much; she always struck me as so very precocious for fourteen. In fact, I'm not sure that she couldn't give points to some modern flappers, as far as sentiment is concerned!

All the same, it was as Juliet that I made one of my first appearances on a stage. It was in some *tableaux-vivants* at school. Juliet was to be impersonated by one of the seniors, a tall, dark girl with wavy black hair and flashing eyes. I am afraid I broke the Tenth Commandment many times that evening when I looked at her brocaded robe and beautiful string of pearls!

But the gods were not kind to the would-be Juliet, and on the very eve of her triumph she tripped over her gown and sprained her ankle, whereat a distraught stage-manager commandeered me for the part. I was hurried into the coveted brocade, and went on in a state of mingled ecstasy and confusion. There was—to use a phrase beloved by journalists—"no hostile demonstration," so I suppose I must have scored a success.

Photos *Elwin Neame.*

In her early days on the stage Miss Kelly dreamt of playing Juliet, and——

——also yearned to appear in the jerkin and high boots always associated with Rosalind.

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My first professional engagement was obtained by answering an advertisement for "Juveniles with clear articulation," and I felt myself passing rich on a salary of five dollars (£1) a week. Strange to relate, managers did not exhibit any undue eagerness to engage me to play "star" parts, but their lack of proper appreciation did not prevent me from indulging in rosy dreams of the time when "Renée Kelly" would be blazoned forth in electric lights in Broadway and other theatrical haunts.

It was not only fame that I dreamt of, but the many pleasant things fame brings. I longed for a house in the country, with a garden full of dear old-fashioned flowers—Canterbury bells, pansies, and stocks—for a boat which I could row on the lake, and a horse I could ride. I always adored horses and dogs, and it seemed to me that those lucky people who had both did indeed inherit the earth.

I am afraid some of my dreams were a trifle worldly, for when the craze for actresses marrying into the aristocracy was at its height, I pictured myself in a coronet, and pined temporarily for musical comedy as a stepping-stone to a ducal mansion. Happily, about this time I got my big chance, and, instead of wearing strawberry leaves, I became Judy Abbott, a part which I have already played over six hundred times.

In my dream-chest there are several little plays I hope some day to perform, among them one about a Dresden china shepherdess who loved an imitation bronze idol with feet of clay. It's a delightful little play, full of delicate charm and pathos, and I've a very warm corner in my heart for that little shepherdess in her pale pink frock with rose-bud paniers.

One of my dreams is to hold an Antique *Fête*, where nothing but antiques would be on sale, and the proceeds of which would go to help our disabled soldiers.

The costume I've set my heart on wearing is of stiff, dull blue silk, bordered with hand-painted flowers, and a poke bonnet cunningly trimmed with tiny rose-buds. There's something so demure about a poke bonnet; I don't believe even the most hardened "flapper"

One of the parts Miss Kelly still hopes to play is that of a Dresden china shepherdess, the heroine of a charming little play that reposes among the treasures in her dream-chest.

Photo Elwin News.

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could wear one without wanting to behave prettily.

Cinderella is a part I've often longed to play; she was such a dear, "put-upon" little soul. As household drudge she had much in common with Judy Abbott, for they neither of them had exactly an hilarious time, did they?

I think, perhaps, why I love playing Judy Abbott so much is because she was essentially a "day-dream" girl. I'm afraid I've never had very much sympathy with girls who are content to jog along without any special desire or goal, and Judy was so splendidly ambitious. Her dream came true, too, for she went to college, and became a famous authoress, and finally broke down Daddy Long-Legs' defences—which was, perhaps, the greatest triumph of all.

But—and this is a great point—if you want your dreams to come true you must do your part towards it. It isn't enough to wish; you've got to work, to weave your own web of fancy into one of reality—which is just what Judy did!

Personally, I think day-dreams, whether they come true or not, are very beautiful things. It's such a relief when things go wrong to be able to slip away into a world of one's own and slam the gate of dreams in the face of the enemy, as it were. Not that I'm urging you to spend your time day-dreaming when you ought to be putting up the clean curtains or learning the painful business of "forming fours." Don't make dreams a profession, or they'll hold you back at every step; make them a hobby, and they'll help you along more than you could ever think possible.

Another ambition of this popular young actress is to hold an Antique *Fête* and wear the costume of ninety years ago—a great contrast to the dream of her childhood, which was to play Portia.

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Some people are apt to let day-dreams slide as they grow older, and that's such a pity, I think. Of course, one can't go on believing in sugar-stick cottages and chocolate cream trees when one attains what are commonly known as "years of discretion," but if some of the old castles in Spain prove unworthy there are always others well worth the building. You don't need to be young in years in order to indulge in day-dreams, but you must be young in heart, and the best of it is they'll help to keep you young. Just try it, and see.

Don't, I implore you, refrain from indulging in day-dreams because of the disappointment if they never come true. I think they are always worth while, because apart from their possible realisation, they bring you so much pleasure in the dreaming. Even if you know you are never likely to be a great singer or the owner of one of the "stately homes of England," it's a delightful occupation to picture yourself in the *rôle*. It's an inexpensive pleasure, too, for a spare half-hour and a little imagination are the only assets required.

Personally, even if I live to be three-score years and ten, I hope I shall always cherish my day-dreams. If they come true, so much the better — if not, well — I shall always have had the pleasure of dreaming them. And I'm a very optimistic person; I shall go on hoping right up to the last minute, and then if they fail me, I shall set to work and weave new webs of fancy to make up for my disappointment.

Photo Ewin Neam Photo Beale, New York.

Miss Kelly has a great desire to take the part of Cinderella, who, as the household drudge, had much in common with Judy Abbott, the "put-upon" heroine of Daddy Long-Legs.

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The "K.H.B."

By "TAFFRAIL"

This is the first of a series of splendid naval sketches by "Taffrail," the author of those popular books "Carry On!" and "Stand By!" Culling, the hero of this particular sketch, is drawn with the sure, intimate touch that distinguishes all "Taffrail's" characters. He is a waster, a "K.H.B.," which, in Navy parlance, means "King's Hard Bargain," but possesses unlimited courage and has exceedingly hard luck.

I.

He was one of those men who imagined that he had done the Navy a good turn by joining it. It did not occur to his distorted fancy that the finest Service in the world was doing him an honour in sheltering him under its paternal wing; neither did he realise, until afterwards, when he tried to earn an honest living ashore, that he was one of those miserable, idle wastrels whom no employer would keep in a job for more than a consecutive fortnight. The Navy clothed him and fed him, and did its best to make him a presentable member of society, but he was not the least bit grateful.

It was not the fault of the Service that it failed to make a good man of him, for Culling, to give him his "pusser's" or assumed name, was for ever getting into trouble. It was not that in his embryo phase he merely kicked over the traces like many a high-spirited young man who sometimes rebels against the minor rules and regulations of man-of-war life, all of which go towards helping to inculcate and uphold discipline. Most youngsters pass through a difficult stage before attaining the steadiness and trustworthiness of manhood. Culling's trouble was of a more flagrant kind—perpetual leave-breaking, a fatal predilection for drink, and constant charges of idleness, slovenliness, being absent from his place of duty, and skulking from his work on board ship.

So in course of time he became a nuisance to himself and unpopular with his shipmates. His officers and petty officers had no good word to say of him, and soon he had been cajoled and corrected to such an extent that persuasion and punishment alike rolled off him like water off a duck's back.

Two pages of the conduct-book were speedily filled with entries against his name; he was incorrigible and worthless, was, in fact, a very fair specimen of what the Navy calls a "useless ullage," or a "K.H.B." It is a moot point which of these two terms is the more opprobrious, for the first likens a man to a useless cask emptied of its contents, while "K.H.B." stands for "King's Hard Bargain."

He went from bad to worse, and finally, early in 1914, finding the Service too hot for him, absented himself altogether, and the Service, greatly to his surprise, made no effort to get him back. To tell the truth, the authorities were glad to be rid of him so easily, for he was no credit to them, and, if he had remained on, the probability was that another month or so would have seen him discharged ashore with "Services no longer required" entered against his name. As it was, they erased his name and placed "Run" against it in red ink, which, being interpreted, meant he was a deserter.

So Culling went ashore and became a gentleman at large, an existence in which, with no thought for the future, he at first rejoiced in his newly-found independence. He had parents, but was ashamed to return to them, and, being a Cockney by birth, gravitated to London. But presently, when his scanty savings were exhausted, he began to cast around for work. Several employers gave him jobs, but one and all discharged him as useless after a short trial, for even with the wolf at the door he was still

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hopelessly untrustworthy, while there was no lack of good men eager to step into his vacant billet.

And so, before long, he drifted into the miserable ranks of the unemployable, men to whom labour of any kind was a bugbear. For some months he managed to eke out a precarious existence by doing odd jobs, selling matches and newspapers, loafing about railway stations, and begging when he got the chance and the police were not looking. But whenever he did succeed in earning a little money most of it went in drink, and his clothes soon became ragged and his boots full of holes. He lived in a perpetual state of semi-starvation. His stomach ached for want of food; his dirty, unshaven face became haggard and pinched, and his lean, gaunt body more and more like that of a living skeleton.

There is no knowing what would have become of him if, within a few days of the declaration of war, his eye had not been caught by an announcement in a halfpenny newspaper:

> His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of pardons being granted to all deserters from the Royal Navy and Marines who surrender themselves forthwith.

Anything was better than this constant feeling of weakness and emptiness within him, and hunger may have been partly responsible for his action. But there was another and a nobler motive, for Culling, in spite of his many faults and failings, was no coward. There was a spark of latent patriotism burning in his heart which told him he was doing the right thing. The Navy must want men at this crisis, and so, without wasting time, he reported to the nearest recruiting officer. The Service, oblivious to his appearance and former history, accepted him.

II.

After a short spell at the Royal Naval Barracks, where they provided him with uniform, and made him do gun and rifle and field exercise until his heart was ready to break, he was sent to a ship—a destroyer.

Here, sobered and tamed by his bitter experiences ashore, he started by behaving himself, though, on account of a sullen, morose disposition and a perpetual grievance against the world in general which jarred on people's nerves, he was never really popular with his shipmates. But he certainly did try to do his best, though he never became really smart or good at his work.

There was one very strong point in his favour, however, and that was that he possessed no sense of fear either of man or the Devil. When his ship struck a mine in a howling gale of wind and a heavy sea, and had the underwater portion of her bows blown away, he was one of the first to volunteer for the dangerous task of going below and shoring up bulkheads on the flooded mess-deck.

It was not his fault that his well-meant efforts did nothing towards increasing the safety of the ship, and that a hard-hearted petty officer, exasperated at his clumsiness, ordered him on deck again with the remark that he might "get to 'ell out of it, 'cos we wants men down 'ere for this job, not perishin' ullages like you." This sort of thing was only typical of the bad luck which dogged him wherever he went, for his best intentions invariably came to nought and never seemed to be appreciated.

Again, when his ship was in action, Culling was largely instrumental in putting out a serious fire after a shell had exploded on board, but in the excitement of the moment his efforts were completely overlooked.

Within a year, however, when the novelty of being at sea again began to wear off, his old instincts reasserted themselves, and once more he kicked over the traces and became a nuisance to himself and to his shipmates.

"Look here, Culling," his Commanding Officer said to him, when he was brought up the fifth time for the serious offence of overstaying his leave with the ship under orders for sea, "this sort of thing can't go on. What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Nothin', sir," mumbled the culprit, fidgeting uneasily. "I tries me 'ardest not to break me leaf', but this time I falls asleep in the Salvation Army 'Ome and doesn't wake up till next mornin'."

The C.O. hid a smile, for the excuse was certainly rather more original than usual. "I see," he said. "One might, perhaps—er—overlook these offences if you did your work properly on board; but, as it happens, you're always being brought before me for skulking and for not doing your job. Has he shown any signs of improvement lately, Petty Officer Shaw?"

"No, sir," said the Petty Officer sourly. "'E's gettin' worse. I'm always 'avin' to find fault with 'im, and if I gives 'im a job o' work I can't trust 'im to do it. 'E dips below on the mess-deck the minute me back's turned. 'E's a fair noosance to everyone, sir."

"You hear what Petty Officer Shaw says?"

"Yessir; but Petty Orficer Shaw's 'ad a down on me ever since I joined the ship, the same as the rest on 'em."

The officer, who hated punishing men, shook his head and sighed; but this was a

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"Look here, Culling," his Commanding Officer said to him . . . "this sort of thing can't go on. What have you got to say for yourself?"

case which could not be condoned, so Culling, greatly to the relief of his shipmates, left the vessel for good and all to undergo ten days' solitary confinement in a cell.

But the daily task of picking one pound of old tarred rope into oakum, the nightly penance on the hard plank bed, the bread and water diet, and the two hours' exercise per diem under the supervision of a stony-hearted corporal of Royal Marines, whose eagle eye always seemed to be upon him the moment he essayed to pick up a quid of tobacco dropped for his benefit on the deck by a sympathetic shipmate, did not act as a deterrent. On the contrary, he merely brooded over the past and hardened his heart, and when, on the expiration of his punishment, he was sent to another destroyer with a chance of redeeming his lost character, the next thing heard of him was that he had been sentenced to twenty-eight days' detention in a house of correction.

III.

It so happened that about six weeks afterwards, H.M. T.B.D. *Zenobia* proceeded to her dockyard port to refit, whereupon, as Able Seaman Peter Whitty had been discharged to hospital with a mysterious swelling in the back of his neck, a signal was made to the depôt asking for a temporary relief in his absence. The depôt obligingly complied, and that same evening the relief, trundling his bag and hammock in a small hand-cart, arrived on board.

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Exactly five minutes later the First-Lieutenant, considerably perturbed, sought the Commanding Officer in his cabin.

"He's come back, sir!" he said.

"Who's come back?" queried the skipper, putting on his best monkey-jacket preparatory to dining ashore.

"Culling, sir."

"Culling! Let me see, wasn't he the man who——"

"Went to cells for leave-breaking, sir. Broke his leave or got speechless every time he went ashore. A regular damned nuisance!"

The C.O. paused in the act of buttoning up his coat. "H'm!" he remarked. "We certainly don't want *him*. We'd better keep him on board for to-night, though, and remind me in the morning to see about getting another man instead of him. On no account let him go ashore in the meanwhile."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Number One, retiring.

But the drafting authorities at the depôt, having already stretched a point in the *Zenobia's* favour by sending a man at all, did not relish having their gilt-horse looked in the mouth, unsavoury quadruped though he was. Politely, but very firmly, they declined to make an exchange, and as Peter Whitty, A.B., remained in hospital with his mysterious ailment, Culling stayed on in the ship, and, on the termination of the refit, went back in her to their East Coast base.

IV.

Ten days later, at 11.15 on a particularly raw and chilly night, Lieutenant-Commander James Allison, R.N., the Commanding Officer of the *Zenobia*, found himself sitting on a barnacled wooden beam a few inches above the turbid water. It was an unenviable and most undignified predicament for a highly respectable member of society and a strict teetotaller, more especially as the horizontal beam on which the redoubtable James was perched was exactly nine inches above the river, and the tide was rising fast. He was fairly wet already, but to all appearances would be wetter still before very long.

The beam formed one of the connecting pieces between two vertical uprights of a jetty, the floor of which, so to speak, was quite twenty feet above his head, and the primary consideration in James' mind was how to reach *terra firma* before the tide rose. The nearest iron rungs serving as ladders were some seventy yards on either side of him. He could perhaps have reached them by taking to the water, but, not being a very strong swimmer, he hardly liked to trust himself to the icy-cold river in the pitch darkness, and in a most uncertain and very strong ebb tide which might whirl him off upstream before he could find the means of salvation he sought.

To climb up was equally impossible, for there was no criss-cross latticework, and the two uprights to which the ends of his beam were connected, liberally encrusted with razor-edged barnacles, were the shape and girth of full-sized oak trees. Neither, for the same reason, could he crawl round the upright to the next horizontal beam, and so make his way to one or other of the ladders.

It had all come about because James, dining out in another destroyer, had elected to row himself back to his own ship in his private dinghy, a craft ten feet long which he had purchased for fifty shillings. While passing the jetty, pulling hard against the tide, one of his sculls had broken. There were no spare ones in the boat, and before he quite realised what had happened he found himself scraping by the jetty and moving rapidly along in the wrong direction. He clutched a beam as he passed, intending to hitch on with the painter in the bows, but the momentum of the boat was more than he had bargained for, and when he stood up the dinghy inconsiderately heeled over, filled with water, and was carried away from under his feet, leaving him hanging on to the beam with his body half in and half out of the water.

After a severe struggle, in the course of which he lost his best uniform cap, tore his garments, and lacerated his face and hands cruelly on the barnacles, he eventually managed to get astride of his insecure refuge, only to find that he could go no further. And so, at an hour when all good folk should be in bed, James found himself in the most awkward predicament it had ever been his lot to experience.

As climbing was quite out of the question, and swimming was only to be adopted as a last resort, he raised his voice and shouted for assistance, though this—since the jetty was generally deserted at that time of night—was almost equally futile.

Midnight came and found the top of the beam well awash in the rising tide. "Lord!" he muttered to himself, his teeth chattering. "I must do something. I'll be washed off this bally thing in another ten minutes!"

He proceeded to remove his boots and sundry clothes with the intention of making a bold effort to swim to the nearest ladder, but it was just as he was taking off his nether garments that he heard somebody approaching overhead. It was not footsteps this time, but a raucous, unmelodious singing at the full pitch of somebody's powerful lungs, a noise

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which indicated that the singer had looked upon the wine when it was very red indeed.

"Way dahn in Tennessee,
That's where I wants ter be . . ."

"Up top there!" bellowed James.

"Right on me muvver's knee,
She thinks the world o' me . . ."

The voice came nearer.

"Help!" James shouted.

"Darkies singin', banjoes ringin',
Orl th' world seems bright . . ."

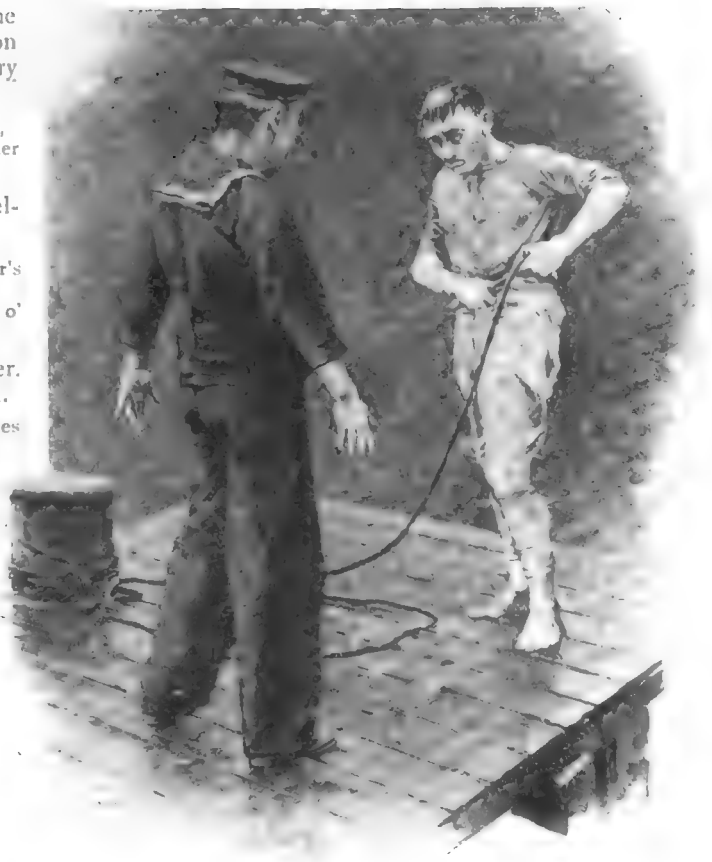
The singer was very close indeed now.

"Hi there! Come and give me a hand!" yelled the officer on the beam.

The singing ceased abruptly, and a head appeared over the side of the jetty.

"'Ullo there! Wot's up? Wot yer singin' art abart?"

"I'm sitting on a beam here and can't get away," James explained. "Go and get a rope's-end, and don't stand there asking silly questions!" He was feeling rather irritable.



The Lieutenant-Commander was suddenly jerked off his feet, and, a minute later, half dragged, half climbing, found himself standing on the jetty.

"Orl rite, guvnor, don't go gettin' rattled. Wot yer doin' dahn there—bathin', or wot? Strike me pink, this ain't no time ter go bathin'."

"If you don't get a rope I shall probably drown," said James.

"Swelp me! Drownin', are yer? 'Arf a mo, I'll take me boots 'orf an' come in along o' yer. I'm a prize swimmer, I am."

"Don't be a fool! Go and get a rope and haul me up."

"Orl rite, 'ooever you are. Don't go gettin' dizzy abart it. I wants ter save yer, 'cos if I does I reckon I'll be a bloomin' 'ero an' 'ave me photygraph in th' . . ."

"Oh! For heaven's sake get a rope!" the officer interrupted.

"'Ere ye are, then, you ongrateful sinner," said the voice. The end of a line came dangling down through the darkness, and James knotted it round his waist.

"Is your end fast?" he asked.

"Yus."

"Haul away, then!"

There was a moment's pause, the Lieutenant-Commander was suddenly jerked off his feet, and, a minute later, half dragged, half climbing, found himself standing on the jetty.

"Swelp me!" ejaculated his saviour. "You ain't got much cloes on, 'ave yer? 'Oo are yer?"

"Is that you, Culling?" James demanded, recognising his voice.

"Lord 'elp us, it's the skipper!" the man muttered, stepping back a pace and saluting unsteadily. "Yessir. It's me, sir."

"And what are you doing ashore here at this time of night?" his C.O. wanted to know.

"Breakin' leaf, sir," answered the "K.H.B."

(Another vivid story, dealing with the adventures of a Naval Officer on leave in Cornwall, will appear next month.)

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HOSPITAL BLUE

BY JESSIE POPE

"There is no pleasure like the pain
Of being loved, and loving."

I.

"But it's such a great, fat leg," remarked fair-haired Lucy Borrodaile, pensively regarding the joint that the local butcher was caressing with such professional admiration.

"Fat it is, Miss Lucy," he replied, "and it's fat you want to eat more of or you'll never be a fine upstanding lady like your mother."

"Oh, well," said Lucy, shrugging her slim shoulders, "you'd better send it round. It won't affect *me* anyhow. I'm going up to London this afternoon to spend a fortnight with Granny."

"Are you indeed, Miss Lucy? Then won't you just step inside and say a word to the Missus? She's doubled up with sciatica and fretting her 'eart out over a letter what's come this morning."

Mrs. Clark, the butcher's wife, had been the Borrodailes' cook for fifteen years, and though Lucy never quite overcame her repugnance for the raw meaty smell that penetrated the parlour, she was particularly fond of old "Cookie," and hastened to make her condolences.

"It's not the sciatica that worries me," said Mrs. Clark, who was as plump and placid as mutton fat and an easy conscience could make her, "though it pains me something chronic; it's this letter saying as our nephew what joined up in Australia is in 'ospital in London and no one to go and see 'im, what with me being crippled and Mr. C. too busy. There 'e lies as like as not with a German bullet inside 'im, knowing full well we're only half-an-hour from London by train, and no one but strangers by 'is bedside. I 'eard all the quarters strike till six this morning, and then I dreamt I was getting ready for the boy's funeral and couldn't find me black gloves."

"Well, don't worry any more, Cookie," said Lucy. "I'm going to London to-day, and, if you like, I'll go and see him."

Delight and a sharp twinge of sciatica struggled for mastery in Mrs. Clark's expression.

"Oh, miss," she ejaculated, "that *is* kind, but what will your ma say?"

"Well, as she and the Dad have gone to Scotland for a month, she won't say anything.

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and Granny always lets me do what I like as long as I don't worry her."

"But I don't know as I ought to trouble you, Miss Lucy," protested the sufferer.

"No trouble, Cookie, a pleasure," replied Lucy heartily, though when, a couple of days later, she stood at the entrance of the hospital she was not quite so sure about it.

At home the Borrodailes were people of importance, and Lucy possessed the easy, self-confident manners natural to the Squire's daughter and the Rector's niece. But in London she realised she was a nobody, and, as this was her first experience of hospital-visiting, she felt considerably smaller than her five feet two inches as she passed through the imposing entrance and was promptly challenged by an R.A.M.C. Corporal.

"I have come to see Private Clark, Ward D2," she said nervously.

"Have you a pass?"

"I don't think so," she stammered. "I didn't know—I—I——"

"Are you a relative?"

"Oh, *no*."

Lucy smiled a little at the very idea of being related to the nephew of the local butcher.

The R.A.M.C. Corporal did not smile.

"I cannot let you through without a pass," he said. "Visiting days are Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday."

Lucy's face fell.

"Oh, but his aunt will be *so* disappointed," she exclaimed, and proceeded to unfold her tale with shy but eager eloquence.

The Corporal eyed her grimly as he listened, then bade her stand aside and wait while he attended to someone else's business, then had a chat with a colleague, and finally rang up the ward Sister and told Lucy she might go through, in a tone that implied it mustn't occur again.

Feeling more like a criminal than a benevolent visitor, Lucy obeyed, and found she had to run the gauntlet of hundreds—or so it seemed to her—of interested wounded heroes in blue, lounging about the long corridor, before she reached the broad staircase at the end.

D2 was on the third floor, and more nervous than ever, and breathless with the climb, she knocked timidly at the door, but, as no one answered, plucked up courage and entered.

The silent hush of the ward, the bare cleanliness of it, impressed her vividly, while the unfamiliar spectacle of so many men in bed made her desperately inclined to turn tail and run. Nobody took the slightest notice of her.

The V.A.D.s, after one casual glance, continued their duties, and the Sister, writing at a table at the far end of the ward, did not even look up.

Pink-cheeked and embarrassed, Lucy approached her and remarked in a thin, nervous voice that she had come to see Private Clark, the Australian.

"Oh, yes," replied the red-caped little lady at the writing-table, "over there in the corner," and, indicating a row of beds with an Australian's slouch hat hanging over one of them, went on with her writing.

A blue-suited "Tommy," with a round, red face and a shade over one eye, was sitting on the next bed to the Australian's reading a comic paper. He stared at Lucy with a vacuous grin as she approached, but whether it was her appearance or a joke in the paper that amused him, was doubtful. Beyond a momentary feeling of resentment Lucy paid him no attention, for the Australian lay asleep and she stood looking uncertainly at the face on the pillow.

It was a nice long, brown face, rather thin and worn, but very boyish in its quiet slumber. A curious feeling, almost of motherly pity, fluttered in the girl's breast as she stood there, doubtful what to do, when all at once the eyes opened—clear, bright brown eyes that met hers without any surprise, and then he smiled, while Lucy's heart gave a quick, inexplicable leap that sent a wave of colour into her face.

"Oh, I'm sorry if I disturbed you," she said, "but Mrs. Clark is laid up and asked me to come instead to see how you were getting on."

A little confused or embarrassed or still mystified with sleep, he made no reply for a moment; then passing a thin brown hand across his face he shook himself together, and reaching over pulled out his bedside chair.

"That's real good of you," he said. "Do sit down."

The interested "Tommy" on the next bed was still grinning, but Lucy sat with her back towards him, and said in her quick, frank way, for all the shyness had suddenly left her:

"I hope you're better. Do you like being here? It's dreadfully clean, isn't it?"

The young Australian laughed, and though his face was rather grim in repose it looked attractive when he smiled.

"Yes," he said, "it's clean enough, but I don't like it any too well. I'm all right again, but I'm in bed to-day because I'm in disgrace."

Lucy giggled sympathetically.

"Why, what have you been doing—running away?"

He nodded.

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"They won't let me out," he said. "I feel like a wild beast in a cage. Yesterday was the limit—so I just walked out."

"What happened?" asked Lucy, her eyes bright with interest.

"There was a bit of shouting and whistling, but I marched on, and up came the R.A.M.C. Corporal at the double."

"A pale-faced man with a black moustache and a threatening manner?" she inquired quickly.

"That's the chap."

"Oh," said Lucy, "is he only a Corporal? I thought he was the O.C.," and they laughed together.

"Well, he ordered me to come back, and I said I would when I'd had my afternoon out. He said: 'Now, at once.' I said that would be silly; I'd only just started. He said was I prepared to take the consequences? I said certainly I was, anything for a change. Then he put out his hand to catch hold of me, but I looked at him and he thought better of it—so I walked on."

"Was he angry?" inquired Lucy.

"As mad as meat axes," replied the Australian with a grin, "but he went back all the same, and I rambled about the streets and got lost, and nearly run over a few times, and enjoyed myself, and came back in time to slip in with a brake-party of chaps who'd been for an outing to some big-head's place, and the Corporal never spotted me."

"Then who found out?"

"The Sister rumbled it later on. She found my temperature had gone up some, and asked me if I'd been out without a pass, and I said yes. She's a good old sort, and never let on any, though she kept me in bed to-day as a punishment, but as I felt a bit tired I didn't mind."

"It was the excitement that sent your temperature up," said Lucy reprovingly. "You silly boy, you'll never get better at that rate."

"I'll never get better if they coop me up here much longer," he exclaimed, and his long brown face grew grim. "I can't stand walls and ceilings; I've never been used to them."

Lucy sympathised and understood, and told him so frankly, and as they talked on, sometimes serious, sometimes joking, it was evident they saw eye to eye in most things, though they took a keen pleasure in arguing out points of difference. All at once Lucy became aware of the clatter of crockery. It was ward tea-time, and glancing at her wrist watch she saw it was after four.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I've been here two hours!"

"Two minutes," he retorted promptly.

She laughed and rose and held out her hand. He held it firmly for a moment, looking up at her with his bright, eager, brown eyes.

"Shall—shall I come again?" she asked hesitatingly.

"I wish you would. The Sister will give you a pass."

"When shall I come?"

"To-morrow."

"Oh—won't that be too soon?"

"Not for me," he said simply.

"And not for me, either," returned Lucy.

In fact, all the way home that lean Anzac, with his worn face and bright brown eyes, and eager, headstrong, boyish ways filled her thoughts, until her grandmother's casual inquiry: "And how is the butcher's boy?" brought her up with a bit of a shock, and she remembered she had not only completely lost sight of his social position, but had also entirely forgotten to deliver all poor old Cookie's affectionate messages. But she also called to mind the evident embarrassment and confusion she fancied he had shown at her one mention of his relatives as she stood by his bedside when he woke.

Well, if he felt a little ashamed of the connection, Lucy was a bit of a snob herself, and sympathised. He was the butcher's nephew, but, though there was no getting away from that fact, it was no business of hers to rub it in.

He was up and sitting on the side of his bed waiting for her the next afternoon, and as he rose, a tall, soldierly figure in hospital blue, with a quick smile lighting up his brown hatchet face, the blot on his social scutcheon completely vanished from her mind. The red-faced "Tommy" in the next bed watched their greeting with the same jocular curiosity, and was so evidently trying to catch their conversation that Lucy felt irritated.

"It's just as well we're not talking secrets," she said after she had listened eagerly to some of the Australian's experiences in Gallipoli and France, and understood with a pang of pity why his face was so grim in repose—"that fat-faced person next door is trying to listen to every word."

"He's not a bad chap," he replied, "and he's terribly interested in you—wanted to know all about you when you'd gone."

Lucy felt mollified.

"And what did you tell him?" she said.

"I didn't tell him anything. I couldn't. You haven't talked about yourself."

"I haven't had much chance," remarked Lucy. He grinned.

"I know," he said, "but *do*. I want you to."

As a matter of fact, Lucy was delighted to

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oblige. She was pretty and dainty enough in a small way, but her two dashing sisters, now successfully married, were so much more brilliant that she had never expected to arouse much interest, or even wanted it. But now, after one or two shy apologies, she became quite autobiographical, and in return gleaned from him bits of his own life—the free, spacious life of the bush, its emergencies and adventures which make a man self-reliant and independent and a law unto himself.

"That's why this place makes me feel tired. I can't stick it much longer."

"But won't they let you have a pass out by yourself?"

"No, unless someone comes and fetches me, and brings me back, like a blooming schoolgirl."

Lucy was silent, and her face flushed a little. Then she said:

"Would they let me take you out?"

"Certainly they would."

"Should you care to come?"

"Wouldn't I?"

"Shall I get seats for a matinée?" He shook his head.

"I've no time for theatres," he said candidly. "We can't talk. I want to stretch my legs and smell the open air."

So they went to Hampstead on the top of a 'bus. It was a clear, sunny, wind-swept day, and they rambled about the Heath in absolute content and the highest spirits. Once or twice the uneasy thought popped up at the back of Lucy's mind: "What am I doing?" but she crushed it quickly, and when they had taxi'd back to town and selected a table at a smart tea-shop, instead of remembering she was having a *tête-à-tête* tea with the butcher's nephew, she really felt proud of her tall, good-looking overseas soldier.

"It's simply absurd of you to be so big," she remarked frivolously.

"It's ludicrous of you to be so small," he retorted.

"This cup is no use to a person of your size," she said, eyeing the dainty ware. "You'd better have your tea in the slop basin."

"I'm quite willing," he replied, "if you'll have yours in a thimble."

And Lucy sharpened her wits to amuse him, because his smile was delightful, while he chaffed her in return for the pleasure of hearing the liquid little giggle, and the moments flew hilariously, and the only pang of regret came at parting.

"Thank you," he said, as they reached the hospital; "it's been a good afternoon."

"Worth repeating?" remarked Lucy.

"You bet," he answered bluntly, but his bright brown eyes spoke volumes, and the grip of his hand on hers set her pulses thrilling all the way home.

They went twice to Richmond Park and once to the Zoo, and sometimes it was fine, and sometimes it rained, but the weather didn't matter, and each outing seemed better than the last. And then one morning a letter came from Colonel Furber, Lucy's favourite uncle, asking her down to Gloucestershire the next day, and as her mother wrote to her to the same effect, and Granny saw both letters, there was no getting out of it. Nothing remained but to write to the Australian at the hospital, regretfully telling him that, instead of paying the return visit to Hampstead Heath as they had planned, she would be catching the 2.25 from Euston to Tewkesbury.

"Relations are a frightful nuisance," she said in her letter, and the same thought recurred as she stood in front of the bookstall at Euston, wondering if anything among that display of light literature could distract her thoughts during the tedious journey. She bought a book about the Dardanelles, and was returning with it rather drearily to her carriage, when all at once her heart thumped, and she saw him striding towards her.

"Thank you for your note," he said. "I've come to see you off."

"Oh!" ejaculated Lucy, suddenly pink and smiling as they walked along together. "How *did* you get out?"

"Over the wall," he replied, "and it was 'some' wall, with a wooden paling at the top."

"Anyone see you?" she asked with sparkling eyes.

"No, but I had to get my weight on the top of the paling to jump down, and it gave way, and we both came down into the road together."

Her brows contracted anxiously.

"Did you hurt yourself?"

"No," he replied grimly, "but I might have done—and I'm going to write to the O.C. to tell him he ought not to leave a fence in that condition as it is a source of danger to the patients."

Lucy giggled joyously. "Oh, what a joke if you did," she said. Then her smile faded as she added: "I'm awfully sorry I'm going away."

"I don't know that it's going to matter so much," he replied, "as I've managed to get here in time." They had reached the deserted end of the platform with only a few rows of milk-cans for company, and he stopped and faced her.

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"I want to ask you to be my wife," he said.

At his words Lucy suddenly woke up from her dream with a cold start of dismay. Those bright brown eyes of his were looking intently into her face, but she only saw a quick panorama of her mother, her brilliantly married sisters, the Squire, the Colonel, the Rector, followed by the little shop with the joints of meat and sausages—old Cookie in the parlour and the butcher caressing his fat legs of mutton. A shiver went through her as she met the eyes of the "butcher's boy" who had just asked her to marry him, and with a note of absolute finality in her voice, she blurted out:

"Oh, gracious, no! I absolutely *couldn't!*"

For a moment he was silent, abashed, rebuffed; then he drew himself up and said:

"Sorry—my mistake," and without another word marched away down the platform.

II.

The Furbers had always found Lucy a gay and entertaining visitor, but during the week that followed they were bound to confess that the girl had lost her charm and was beginning to lose her looks. She was dull and irritable, ate little, and, though they didn't know it, slept less, and when the time came for departure the mutual regrets expressed at the parting were purely complimentary. Lucy was thankful to get home; her parents were still away, and there was no need to keep up the hollow mockery of a cheerful demeanour.

But the irksome round of daily life had got to be lived through somehow, and the tradesmen's books, including the butcher's, must be paid, though it was a distinct relief, on the third morning after her return, to find that old Cookie was not in the pay-desk.

"Morning, Miss Lucy," said Mr. Clark. "The missus will be sorry not to see you. She's out buying a bit of fish. Fact is, we've got my nephew 'ere what you kindly visited in 'ospital, and she feeds 'im up like a lamb. 'E's getting 'is discharge and 'e's going to settle with us and give me a 'and. Always 'ad a turn for the butchering."

Lucy went cold and hot and cold again, and stayed at that temperature.

"Oh, that will be very nice," she said mechanically.

"I'm sure we appreciate the trouble you took, miss."

"Not at all," she said calmly. "I found your nephew very entertaining and a typical Colonial."

Mr. Clark laughed. "'Ardly *that*, miss," he said, "seeing 'e was only in Australia a month or two."

She stared incredulously.

"Oh, 'e's a cute one!" continued the butcher with relish. "'E 'eard from a pal out there that they was paying their soldiers six bob a day, and, as our boys only get a bob a day, he went out and joined up in Sydney." Lucy listened without comment, but there was bitterness and irony in her heart. So much for his eloquence on the wide free life of the bush that makes a man self-reliant and a law unto himself. However, it was just as well; this was the kind of cold-water cure her fever needed.

"'E's in there now," continued the butcher, jerking his head towards the parlour, "chopping the pork for the sausages; 'is aunt said the shop was over draughty for a wounded 'ero. I suppose you wouldn't look in and say a word to 'im, Miss Lucy?"

Lucy knew that parlour, with its meaty smell and crochet mats and memorial cards. The sound of a rhythmic chopping caught her ear, and the sight of him engaged in one of the arch-mysteries of the trade would surely complete the cure.

"Oh, yes, I will," she assented calmly, and walked through. A man in a blue apron and shirt sleeves, leaning over the chopping-block, looked up as she entered, and Lucy found herself face to face with—not her tall, brown-faced Australian—but the inquisitive "Tommy" of the next bed.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "Mr. Clark said his nephew was here!"

The round, red-faced man grinned his old vacuous grin. "That's me, miss," he said. "You made a little mistake at the 'ospital. But I didn't let on—I thought you'd 'a' found it out by now."

"A mistake!" she reiterated, staring at him in perplexity.

"Yes, miss, you visited the wrong man. I seen 'ow it was. Aunt wrote you was coming to see me—but I was a bit shy like—and you two got on so uncommon well I laid low. I see you 'adn't brought anything with you, or I might have spoken up," he concluded with a chuckle.

"But—but his name was Clark," she said breathlessly.

"Yes—but 'e spelt it with a h'e at the h'end of it. Folks often got mixed up with us both being Australians—but 'e was the real thing—'is people are big bugs in Sydney, though 'e only joined the ranks. 'Ope you're not put out about it, miss."

With a big effort Lucy pulled herself together, inquired after his health, left a message for his aunt, and got into the

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They had reached the deserted end of the platform with only a few rows of milk-cans for company, and he stopped and faced her. "I want to ask you to be my wife," he said.

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street. Her brain whirled. What had she done?—thrown away the biggest prize life had to offer! The gods had made sport of her with a vengeance; would they have pity now and give her the chance to put things right? The sudden flash of hope almost dazzled her. She clenched her hands and vowed she'd do her best.

Twenty minutes later she was on her way to town, and within an hour stood at the entrance of the hospital.

"Clark—D2? Oh, he's gone away," said the R.A.M.C. Corporal indifferently.

"No, I mean Clarke, the Australian; there were two in the ward of the same name."

He turned up the office books.

"Both gone," he said. "One on furlough to friends in the country, the other to Harefield Convalescent Hospital."

"Where's that?" said Lucy, biting her lip hard to stop it trembling. "How do I get there?"

From Marylebone or Paddington, she was told, and then, impelled by the expression of tragic intensity in her face, the official became temporarily human and looked up the earliest train for her.

She took a taxi and caught it; even if there had been time for lunch she could not have eaten any, though as she sat staring out of the window at the flitting fields and hedges she could frame no coherent plan of what she should do or what she should say when she found him. If only fate would let her *see* him again, inspiration would come. And see him she *must* and *would*. At Denham, the little wayside station for Harefield, they told her it was a stiff two and a-half miles' walk to the hospital. It was all up hill and there was a big wind against her.

Every now and then, as she fought her way along, a feeling of utter hopelessness and exhaustion would come over her, but the sight of slouch-hatted figures coming down the road—for the hospital boys were out for their afternoon stroll—spurred her energies. Her heart gave a sickening leap each time one came in sight, but the faces were all unfamiliar, and she was anticipating with nervous dread the ordeal of interviewing more hospital officials, when, at a turn of the road, she saw him walking away from her.

He was striding along, the tall, slim, boyish figure and the old swinging stride she knew so well, though the dark blue Harefield kit was unfamiliar. If she was to catch him before he turned in at the hospital gates she must run, and run she did, though by the time she came alongside her heart was beating like a sledge-hammer and her wind none too good. He turned at the sound of her footsteps and saw her with a start of astonishment. His face looked longer and grimmer than ever, and he did not smile.

"I want to speak to you," said Lucy, endeavouring to control her voice, "but not here," for there were half-a-dozen Australians coming towards them. He led the way without a word to a field-path, and they walked down it. Lucy suddenly stopped and sat down on the hedge bank.

"I'm so tired," she said. "I must rest a moment." He sat down by her side and waited. Then Lucy clenched her fists tight and began to speak.

"I have come to tell you I made a mistake at the hospital. I ought to have visited the man in the next bed to yours, who was the nephew of our local butcher. I thought the Sister pointed to you, and I thought you were the man all the time. I only found out this morning. And when you said—that—to me—at the station I answered as I did because I—I daren't face my people—not because I—didn't—love you."

But still he was silent, and his silence flooded her mind with sudden, horrible, overwhelming doubts. Had he thought better of it? Didn't he want her any more? Had he met someone else? She looked up at him desperately with a scarlet blush of shame rising to her pale cheeks. His face was averted, but she saw the long chin was puckering ominously, and she heard a quick, gasping breath.

"Oh!" she cried. "What is it?" Her arm slid round his shoulders, and next moment the long, brown, working face was hidden in her bosom, and a boyish voice was whispering brokenly:

"I *can't* believe it's true. I've had such a deuce of a time!"

"Oh, *so* have I," whispered Lucy, as his arms clutched her close and they found each other's lips.

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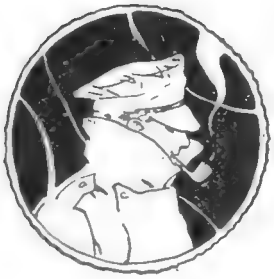

THE JOTTINGS OF A SUBALTERN.

III.—MAURICETTE.

Again are the young affections of the susceptible Cosmo heartlessly trifled with, this month by a beauteous and charming lady he meets in the Bohemian atmosphere of a Chelsea studio.

You have no idea how London refreshes the poor soldier. I can lave my tired soul in the jolly old rumpus of Piccadilly and Bond Street and come away with the brains of a Brigadier. Just to see the old club and theatre signs and have tea with a girl in one of the few places decent people do take girls to tea at will keep me going through weeks of training as happy as a bird. And I, by the way, am Cosmo Vernon Lacy, Second-Loot in the crackest of cavalry, the 31st Pinkshires, the dear old die-hard Poppy-shirts.

Consequently when I extracted forty-eight hours' leave from a sympathetic O.C. and fetched up in the dear old village, I could have cried with happiness like a kid. I put up at my favourite hotel, had a Turkish bath, and strolled back feeling lighthearted and at peace. The thought of dinner soothed and comforted me; the question was with whom to dine.

In that hour I remembered Cory-Maitland, one of the very best. He isn't soldierin' because the M.O. won't have him, but he paints like an angel and has an old rambling house in Chelsea, and can always scare up the most surprisin' girls at a moment's notice. Slappin' myself on the back, I fled to the telephone and rang him up.

"My dear boy, I understand exactly," he drawled in his quiet way. "You're fed up with war and you want woman and wine and the atmosphere of Art. Come round at seven and we'll have a jaw and dine at eight. I go to choose your fellow-guests. Farewell!"

Feeling sort of comfy inside, I made my modest toilet, smoked a cigarette or two, skimmed over the illustrateds, and departed in a taxi for Cory-Maitland's place. We sat in his studio, a great barn of a room, drinking sherry and bitters and talking over old times. The poor old chap is awfully sick of being out of things.

"If only my beastly heart would stand it——" he sort of groaned, smiling the wrong way about. "Still, as it won't, I can at least amuse you men of blood. It sounds as if the others had arrived, by the way."

The others had. We got up to meet them—Jones, a Captain in the Gunners, and three of the most magnificent girls I have ever met. They all wore those exciting sort of evening frocks that seem to be held up by a string of beads round the owner's neck and haven't any sleeves or

"Bits" struck a friendly sort of note at once by sitting down on the floor and pulling up her stockings.

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shoulders, and were simply bubbling over with beans. They all called Cory-Maitland "Georgie" and Jones "Dick." Our host introduced them, after the custom of Chelsea, by their Christian names, and kissed each of them with simple dignity. I stood trying to look as if it were all perfectly natural.

Muriel, a tall, dark person with a beautiful figure, annexed Cory-Maitland at once. I had an idea she was in love with him and there was nothing doing, but he was most awfully decent and behaved like a brick to her. Jones had gone dotty over a golden-haired nineteen-year-old whom everyone called "Bits." "Bits" struck a friendly sort of note at once by sitting down on the floor and pulling up her stockings, which she swore were coming down, and then looking up at us with an innocent angel expression that sent me into shrieks of laughter.

My girl was Mauricette.

I don't suppose anything prettier in skirts will ever come the way of a poor cavalryman than she was. Her hair seemed neither dark nor fair, and she neither tall nor short. She had violet-blue eyes with a sort of sleepy devil in them, and a golden dress. If she had asked me to, I would have gone to blazes instantly for her. Fortunately she didn't.

We swam in a sort of glorious dream through one of Cory-Maitland's amazing dinners—the best of everything and everything the best. Wish I knew where he gets his cigarettes, but he won't tell me. Muriel and "Bits" sparkled like twin stars. Mauricette seemed to be in a devilish mood, and was out for any sort of mad nonsense. She chipped me unmercifully, too, and called me "the child" and all that sort of thing. Of course, I'm not exactly ancient, but Mauricette is twenty-one, and I shall never see twenty-two again.

After dinner in the studio we shoved the table into a corner and rambled across to the big fireplace. Jones sat down on the hearthrug with "Bits," and began to tell her fortune by the lines on her hand, which he held gently yet firmly. Muriel and Cory-Maitland leant against the mantelpiece smokin' cigarettes and jawing about pictures. I gathered she was a model. Mauricette shrugged her pretty shoulders and made a face.

After dinner Jones sat down on the hearthrug with "Bits," and began to tell her fortune by the lines on her hand, which he held gently yet firmly.

"This is a dull gathering, Cosmo," she complained, turning to me. "Let me see if I can liven it up."

And before one could say "knife" she had turned three of the neatest cartwheels I ever saw, and finished up as light as a feather on her gold-shod feet without a hair out of place. It took my breath away, I can tell you.

"I'm going to wash my hands," she went on. "Georgie's floor isn't so clean as he thinks. Come and turn the tap on for me, Cosmo."

Well, I'm never backward in helping a pretty girl. We went out into the studio kitchen, and she rinsed a few specks of dust

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We went out into the studio kitchen, and sat on the table and lit cigarettes. Mauricette seemed lost in thought. "Child," she said suddenly, "why don't you kiss me?"

off her hands. It was a cosy little room with a fire, so we sat on the table and lit cigarettes. Mauricette swung her legs idly and seemed lost in thought.

"Child," she said suddenly, "why don't you kiss me? You know you want to. Are you afraid, or what?"

"I don't think so," I said a little jerkily, being somewhat taken aback. Then I tilted up Mauricette's chin and kissed her as attractively as I could.

She closed her eyes dreamily and kissed back. It was a wonderful moment.

Just as I thought I must have gone suddenly to Heaven or something she shoved me away and stood up with her violet eyes positively blazing.

"So that's the impression I give you, is it?" she stormed. "I seem to be the kind of girl that anybody can rot about with on a moment's acquaintance. Kindly tell me just why you did that."

"Well—but—really—why, you asked me to!" I stammered, feeling a most hopeless ass.

"I asked you to!" she mimicked scornfully. "If I asked you to strangle me or jump off the roof I s'pose you'd have done it. I asked you to! What do you mean?"

Not meaning anything in particular, I just felt uncomfortable and said nothing.

"Have you a sister?" demanded Mauricette.

"Yes—one," I said rather faintly.

"Pretty?"

"Not so bad."

"Well, what would you think of a man who kissed her after about an hour's acquaintance?"

"If she asked him to, I s'pose he'd have to," I stammered, wishing I'd never seen Mauricette.

"I have never in my life asked you or anybody else to kiss me," asserted that young lady, sitting on the table again. "I asked you why you didn't kiss me. You might have said: 'Because I'm a gentleman and know how to behave,' you know. P'raps that didn't occur to you?"

I said nothing. What could one say? I knew she was wrong, but she sounded right. Women so often do.

"I suppose a girl on her own can't expect anything better," went on Mauricette bitterly. "I am quite alone in the world. I earn my own living by designing frocks I shall

"I want you all to drink to Cosmo, the best sportsman I ever met," she said. Then Mauricette pitched her glass into a corner, where it smashed into pieces.

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never be able to afford. I work hard for every penny I get. Of course no one will ever marry me because I have to knock about and risk—er—the sort of thing that happened this evening. Besides, I have brains, and men hate brains in a girl. I suppose, Mr. Lacy, I must make up my mind to be an amusement for the spare moments of young people like yourself?"

"Mauricette, don't!" I exclaimed.

"And yet," she went on dreamily, "I do so long for a home of my own with a man who would love me and take care of me. I'd so much rather lean on someone than be strong for myself. Girls hate sticking up for themselves, but you see how necessary it is, don't you, Mr. Lacy?"

The big violet eyes seemed to have become misty. I looked at Mauricette very thoughtfully. I saw how beautiful she was, and I felt a most unspeakable bounder. I realised I should never find anyone more charming in a hundred years, and somehow I knew we could be good pals. So I just came to the position of attention.

"Mauricette, I beg your pardon; will you marry me and let me take care of you? I'm not exactly hard up, and when the war's over I'd chuck the service if you like and settle down, and we'd have a bit of hunting and a good time generally. Do say yes, and we'll go and ask the others to drink our healths."

She sat very still on the table looking at me like the Colonel looks at you when he's summing up your immortal soul. And then she slipped down and took my hands, and said in a choking little voice:

"Cosmo, you're a good sort and I'm a little beast. I was only teasing you because I'm in a bad temper. I'm engaged really to the dearest man in the world, and he's fighting in France now. Georgie can tell you all about it. I expect I'm a little mad really, only you can't always be weeping and wailing, can you?"

Well, I don't pretend to understand girls, so I just stood there feeling rather sick with everything, and wishing myself back in my quarters with the regiment. But Mauricette pulled me round.

"Kiss me again, please, just to show you aren't cross," she murmured.

Well, Mauricette was very, very pretty. It was a wonderful kiss in its way.

She led me back into the studio, poured out solemnly glasses of sunshine-water for everyone, and handed them round.

"I want you all to drink to Cosmo, the best sportsman I ever met," she said.

They all drank, mystified but enthusiastic. Then Mauricette pitched her glass into a corner where it smashed into a thousand pieces.

"Hanged if I don't almost envy the girl you marry," she said to me, and somehow if I'd won the V.C. I don't think I should have felt half so bucked.

(Another episode in Cosmo's glad career appears next month.)

LEAVE.

I arrived, and was met by a cousin or two,
  An aunt, and a girl they call "Jack";
They shook hands, and kissed me, and called me "old boy,"
They treated me just like a new kind of toy—
They did all they jolly well *could* to annoy!
  (Excepting the girl they call "Jack"!)

They dragged me to dances and noisy revues
  And tea-fights that made my head rack,
They asked if I'd ever been close to a Hun,
And "what was a sniper—a man or a gun?"
They all crowded round and asked questions like fun—
  (Excepting the girl they call "Jack"!)

In spite of the row, it's been eight days of bliss,
  But to-morrow I've got to go back
To dirty old Flanders, the mud and the rain,
But, hang it! I've really no right to complain,
'Cos I've reason to think, when I get leave again,
  I shall marry the girl they call "Jack"!

Mabel Dean.

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THE FIRST ARTICLE OF A BRILLIANT SERIES.

Are They Really Dead?

By
HORATIO BOTTOMLEY.

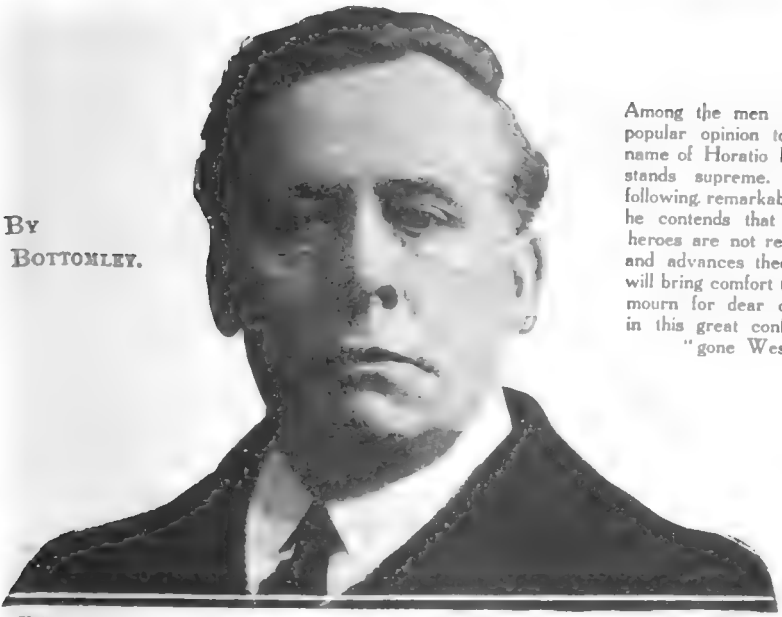

Photo J. Russell & Sons.

Among the men who lead popular opinion to-day the name of Horatio Bottomley stands supreme. In the following remarkable article he contends that our war heroes are not really dead, and advances theories that will bring comfort to all who mourn for dear ones who in this great conflict have "gone West."

Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the author of the following powerful article.

Do you remember the story (usually attributed to Lord Beaconsfield) of the witty Lord Chesterfield, who once claimed that his religion was "the religion of all sensible men"?

"And what is that?" ventured an inquisitive friend.

"No sensible man ever says," came the cynical retort.

And so I can imagine that many of my readers, as they glance at the title of this article, will be inclined to rank me with those who "rush in where angels fear to tread." However, I am going to take the risk.

Truth to tell, I am not greatly enamoured of the convention that places all matters of religious belief, the vital problems of Life and Death and the Beyond, outside the pale of popular discussion. It seems to me a form of moral and mental cowardice. In every other branch of human speculation, free discussion and inquiry have been the conditions of progress. Why, then, should we be silent upon the grandest theme of all?

Does Man Survive the Grave?

"If a man die shall he live again?" The question is the perennial cry of tortured humanity. Is Man mortal? Is Death the end? Shall Life endure? Is there room for comfort and for hope? Is Religion a mere farrago of picturesque legend, or at the best, a chaste monument of imaginative literature, or may we discover in its books the sign-manual of Truth? Was Christ a mere visionary, or at most an inspired moral teacher, or had He the clue to the Eternal Mystery? Such, through the centuries, have been the soul's deep questionings. And as the aim and focus of all speculation, the one unending query: "Does Man survive the grave?"

The Question Nearest our Hearts.

To-day this eternal question is related to the throbbing reality of a world's grief. For the avenues of Death are broadened, the gates of the Tomb are flung widely open, and thousands of our bravest have already passed to the Great Beyond. Are they really dead? Shall we ever meet them again? Does nothing remain of all that was noble, true, and heroic, of all that claimed our love and inspired our heart's devotion? Are their gallant souls destroyed? In other words, are our dear war heroes really "dead"?

These are not the barren speculations of philosophy, or of a theology that has lost its Faith. Such questions spring not from mere

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intellectual curiosity, but from the agony of broken hearts, from the anguish of minds assailed by dark despair. They come from widows in their bitter loneliness, from parents faced with life's most poignant tragedy, from lovers robbed of joy and promise, from children who on the threshold of life have met the affrighting spectre of Death.

The Great Enigma clamours for solution. Can we believe, dare we accept the assurance of the rubric that our dear ones are laid aside "in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection"? If so, then, indeed, we shall "not be sorry as men without hope." But even the devout are dubious. What is the truth?

Comfort from the Watch-Tower of Knowledge.

I fancy we shall find an answer sooner if we lift the question from the realm of dogma, from the dark counsels of a mediæval theology, on to the surer ground of practical philosophy and scientific fact. Yes, *scientific*—for Science is no longer the enemy of Faith; and I verily believe the re-discovery of true Religion, with an authentic message of hope and comfort for the human race, will be the work not of the priest in his shaded cloister, but of the scientist on the watch-tower of Knowledge. I believe that in the realm of pure science, in the department of cold reason, apart altogether from the texts of the theologian and the dreams of the poets, we are on the eve of discoveries that will change our whole outlook upon the problems of Time and Eternity, that will exalt Faith into moral Certainty, and wring Hope from the very jaws of Despair.

I am more sceptical than many in regard to what is commonly known as "revealed" religion. I have no use for theological dogma. I am afraid that if I had been destined for the Church, where some of my friends even now would like to see me, I could not honestly have signed one of the Thirty-Nine Articles or subscribed to a single clause of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

I am not, in the common acceptation, a "religious" man. But this stupendous war has set me thinking, searching, and inquiring; and in all seriousness and sympathy, in all reverence, I say to the weeping widow, to the stricken mother, to all who are bent beneath the war's great load of sorrow: "Be of good cheer, for the dawn of your comfort is at hand!"

Away with Creeds and Dogmas!

The soul demands surer comfort than is to be found in hackneyed Scripture texts, in dogmas unverified, in icy formularies, and stony creeds.

Faith must be fed with Knowledge. Hope must be founded in Fact.

But what kind of knowledge, what form of fact is it that is driving on the world? I have said it will come to us through the channel of science and reason. But it will be science and reason applied to the super-physical. So far, our great biologists and chemists, with about two exceptions, have never ventured beyond the things of this world, this life. It was an eminent Harley Street surgeon who once said: "I have cut open many human bodies in my time, but I have never found any trace of a soul." It was considered a smart, convincing epigram. But you won't find the human soul in the appendix or the bladder. Its only physical manifestation is in the eyes. And it is for the scientist of the future to locate it, analyse it, follow it.

The Secret of the Universe.

I have long formed my own view of the form the discovery will take. Putting all legend and allegory on one side, I am convinced that the universe is permeated by an ocean of Vital Force—Life Fluid—which is ever flying into and out of (at birth and death) *every* living thing—vivifying, magnetising it according to its receptivity. Let me explain: An Ethiopian couple marry; there arrives the time when the little pick-a-ninny is "quickened"—that is to say, when its human magnetism is sufficiently developed to attract to itself the necessary vitalising fluid to give it life and being.

But it is coarse material, and very little of the Force is caught. Still, it gives "life" and it lasts till the magnet gives out, and then flies back, *unaltered*, to the great sea. It is never lost, and in that sense the soul of the meanest living thing is immortal. It is like taking a thimbleful of water from the ocean, keeping it for a time, and then pouring it back. You couldn't say it was lost; but it could never be found again. In this case I have assumed that the good little nigger boy never did any real, conscious harm or good in life; consequently, his vital fluid was neither vitiated or refined.

The Effect of Environment.

Now take the case of a child higher up in the human scale. First of all, it will attract to itself, and retain, a larger quantity of Life Fluid than did the little blackamoor, and then in later years the fluid, or force, will be purified or deteriorated by what the Buddhists call the *Karma*—the good or evil influence of the life; and when physical death comes it will flow back into what Dickens called

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"the sea of Immortality which flows all round the world"—a phrase which caught *my fancy* as a very young man, and set me thinking.

Well, so far you will say, we are a long way off the answer to our question. Wait a moment! Up to the present I have taken the cases of two types—both ordinary normal specimens of their class. In the one, low down in the scale of evolution I have assumed that the soul—which is the most convenient word—what there was of it, returns to its source unaffected in any way by its temporary sojourn. In the other, I have regarded it as either refined or degraded by the conscious acts of its possessor. And it will be seen that on this theory the great store of Life Force is always tending towards a higher or a lower degree of Divinity. In other words, until all mankind is exalted to a true nobility of character, we can never, in the hackneyed phrase of the Churches, enter the Kingdom of God. (I am dealing now with the human race only; the animal Kingdom is a separate and profoundly interesting study.)

Comfort for Those who Mourn.

But now I come to an aspect of the matter wherein there is comfort and hope for all who have been bereaved by the war. So far I have spoken of the soul returning to its source, after death, in the same or a better or worse condition than that in which it entered the human body; and I have not suggested that once liberated it retains any of its individuality; it simply goes back like the thimbleful of water, leaving the sea unaffected or in a minute degree purifying or polluting it, according to the elements it has collected during its human habitation.

But since the Divine purpose is ever towards exaltation, there is one thing, and one thing only, which insures Conscious Life after Death—the ennoblement of the soul by Love and Sacrifice to such a degree that once liberated from its mortal prison it is of too high a quality to blend with the common ocean, and roams about in search of an Affinity—which it finds in those who were dearest to it in life and for whom primarily the love and the sacrifice were given. And it is the bridging of the gulf which separates Here from the Beyond which is the problem of the scientists in the immediate future. And some of them are doing it. Dark rooms and "spiritual *séances*" won't do it. They are all frauds.

The Gateway to the Life Beyond.

Nature abhors darkness—and so does Truth. But I can tell you that one of the greatest scientists in England, a man of European reputation, the Principal of a modern University, one with whom accurate thought and critical analysis are the habits of a lifetime—Sir Oliver Lodge—having lost a son upon the battle-field, has devoted his unique powers of investigation to this great mystery, and after weighing every scrap of available evidence, considering every argument—coldly, dispassionately, scientifically—has declared his unalterable belief that what we call death is but the gateway to the Life Beyond.

There is no mistaking the significance of such testimony, nor dare I question the validity of evidence that has satisfied one of the most brilliant of modern scientific minds. And if the word of the Principal of Birmingham University is not sufficient, it is reinforced by that of Sir William Crookes, a man who has won the Order of Merit by his notable contributions to scientific truth, and who now declares his deep conviction that the life we know is but a single phase of conscious existence, and death a mere episode in the Ascent of Man.

The Unfolding of a Majestic Purpose.

To me these are facts of stupendous significance, and the realisation of a cherished hope. I have long believed that sooner or later the straight and narrow path of scientific investigation would lead us to the heart of the world's central mystery. To some, Faith comes easily, intuitively; to others, only by painful searching, but I look forward with sanguine hope to a day when knowledge of a future life will be part of the common heritage of man. Already scientists and philosophers are joining hands with poets and mystics to proclaim the glories of the Life Eternal. The historian sees in the annals of the race the slow unfolding of a majestic Purpose.

There was a time when the cleverest men thought this tiny earth the centre of the Universe of God. We smile at the conceit, but perhaps future generations may wonder how men could ever have believed that this little span of earthly life was the sum and extent of human existence. Perhaps some of the brave ones we have loved and lost are seeking even now to pierce the veil, and to share with us the sublime knowledge which has come to them in a flash of glory. For they are not dead. Earth is not a charnel-house. Brute force has no power to destroy the life of man. Some day we shall understand and laugh at our weak misgivings. Till then we will believe—as our hearts prompt us, as Love instructs us, and as growing Knowledge suggests—until the clouds break and the

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heavens are radiant with the glory of the dawn.

The Threshold of a Great Discovery.

If, then, you are a bereaved parent or sister or sweetheart or brother, be comforted. He who gave his life in this great cause yet lives, and is ever trying to manifest his presence to you. He is tapping at the Gate of the Land of Mystery, which, *at present*, is beyond our ken. Some day you will hear—sooner perhaps, than you are to-day prepared to believe. I have done my best to express views which have been forcing themselves upon me for some years past, and especially since the war. I feel certain that I am on the threshold of a Great Discovery, and I have in my mind a fantastic idea which I want to discuss with my old friend, Sir William Crookes. And some day I may tell you all about it.

Preparation for a Great Awakening.

The man who made the X-rays possible may yet assist us to look into, or at any rate get in touch with, the soul. I believe it can be done; I believe it is about to be done; and there are more remote explanations of the world-tragedy which is to-day deluging the earth in tears and blood than that it may be God's mysterious way of preparing us for a great Awakening. After Armageddon—Peace. After Battle and Bloodshed—Love. After Sacrifice and Suffering—Exaltation. After Death—for the Ordinary—Oblivion; for the Wicked, Unrest; for the Noble and the Worthy—Life, Glory and Re-Union everlasting.

(Next month Mr. Bottomley will discuss the burning question: "Should Women be Conscripted?" a subject in connection with which he puts forward some striking and practical suggestions.)

YOUTH.

My faith! I remember the days so well
  When I crept from my early bed
To watch the dawn, in the greenest dell
  That ever knew fairy tread;
For over the country, the legend said
  That the spears of a knightly band
Glowed, as the dawn grew gold and spread
  Over the darkened land.

When the dew on the whin flowers freshly lay,
  Sped a girl from her dreaming, woke,
And I saw the gold of the spears one day
  And I bowed to the fairies' joke;
And many there came, of the village folk—
  The old, and the heart of youth—
But 'twas only I—and I never spoke—
  Who knew that the tale was truth.

Well, the dawn is not what it used to be,
  Or I am a child grown old;
For the years have given my eyes to see
  And their gaze is clear and cold.
For the Knights still troop on their chargers bold,
  But their faces are stern and dread,
And I see through the veil that was wrought of gold
  The spears that are dripping red!

Gwen Nisbet

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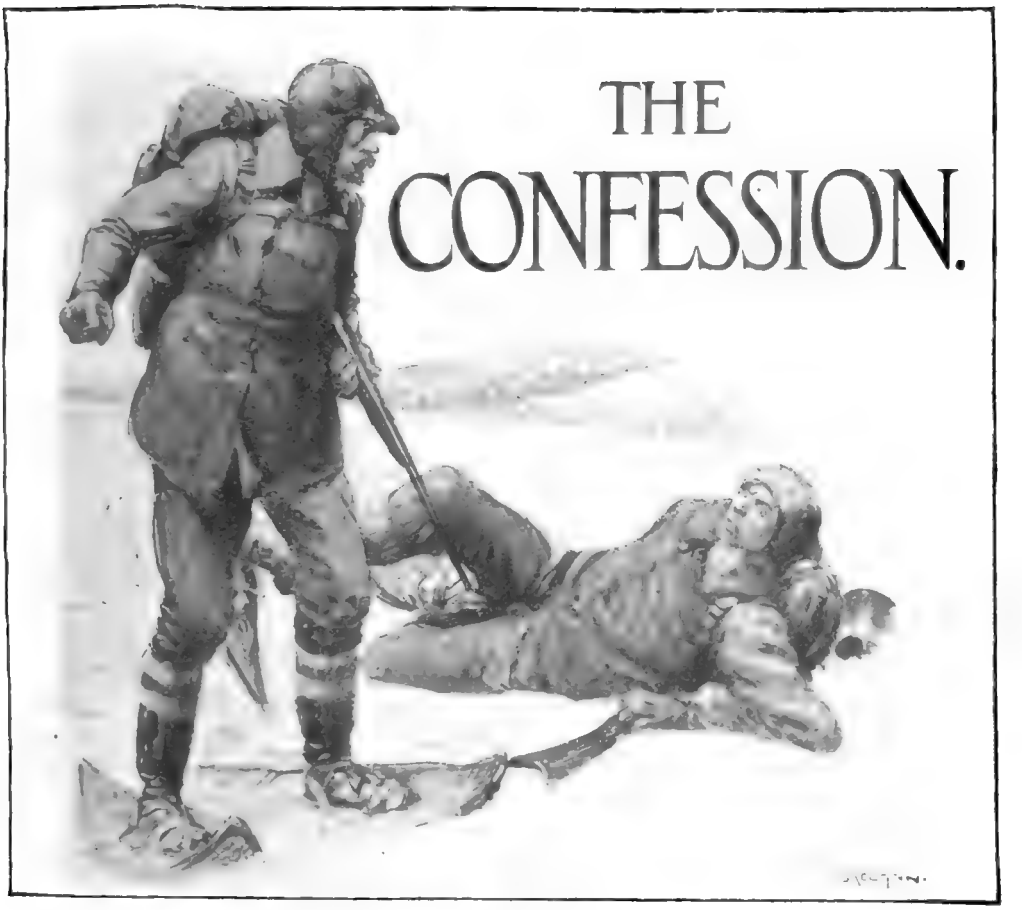

THE CONFESSION.

By Bertram Munn.

"The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind:
A savageness in unreclaimed blood."

For ten days they had beaten their way through the crumbling snow, staggering on and on, without a pause more than was necessary.

Life had dropped down to the elemental. Each one of them knew every expression, thought, idea of the other. In the six months they had lived together without seeing a soul all news had become exhausted. Branstowe knew every detail of Webb's life. He knew his parents' history, his school life, his sorrows, his joys, his absurd little love affairs, his likes, his desires. There was not a nook or crevice in the man's soul which had not been shown to him. The great silence and loneliness had at first been conducive to confidences. Finally, it had led to irritation. It had reached such a pitch that Branstowe even hated the sound of the other's voice, in case it should repeat itself.

As he looked around at the endless expanse of glittering white snow he felt that he preferred it to the company of the man beside him. He had become almost inured to loneliness, and there was something great and impressive about it—nothing mean and petty like the confidential little remarks of his companion.

"You know," said Webb, in some way finding the breath to waste, "we're jolly lucky that the weather's kept fine."

"We are," answered Branstowe.

"I remember once, Saskatchewan way, travelling for six days by myself."

"You've told me before," interrupted Branstowe abruptly.

"Have I?" amiably rambled on the other.

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"By Jove, though, it was the very devil! Couldn't see a yard in front of me."

"Wonder you survived it!" jerked out Branstowe.

"Oh! I was as hard as nails in those days. This has been mere child's play—or I couldn't have stood it."

"It's not over yet by any means!"

"Oh! We'll pull through. We've enough food for another two days. I reckon we'll hit the trail to-morrow. Gad! I'll be glad to get this claim through and have everything settled. I expect you'll be glad to get away home as well?"

"I shall," agreed Branstowe with enthusiasm.

"I guess there's ten thousand at the back of it if there's a penny!"

"So you've said before."

"It's worth repeating, though, Branstowe," came the reply. "Eh? Don't you agree?"

"Yes! Yes!"

For a few minutes they trudged on in silence, but Webb's brain was evidently still hard at work for conversational purposes.

"Branstowe!" he said at last. "Don't you think——"

Branstowe turned on him angrily. "Good heavens, man, can't you be quiet for a minute? I'm sick of your infernal chattering. Why the blazes don't you save your breath? You'll want it! I tell you we're not out of this yet. We're not going to strike any trail to-morrow, nor the next day, nor the next. We're lost, man! Lost! We'll go on tramping and tramping till the food gives out—and then you'll stop your chattering!"

Webb paled perceptibly. "You believe that?" he stammered.

"I do! I'm certain!"

"But, look here——"

"Oh, shut up!" burst out Branstowe. "Talking won't do any good. If it would, you'd have been there by now!"

Silence fell on them again—a morose, heavy silence, broken only by the soft crunching of the snow under their feet.

For the remainder of that day Webb was quiet. In the evening he ate his food savagely, watching Branstowe with a scowl the while. Then he turned and watched the light fade from the southern horizon and leave in its place the slate-grey mist that heralded the night. An intense silence dropped down on the earth. The whole white world seemed to be locked in the sleep of death. The man beside him became a still, black outline, with not even the sound of a breath. He wanted to shout, but dared not.

For the first time in his life Webb had become afraid of his own voice.

* * * *

The next day he found his voice again. It was somewhere towards noon.

"Branstowe!" he said. "We were fools not to bring more grub with us."

"We were!"

"I suggested it, you know, only you said——"

"We brought enough," half shouted Branstowe. "Quite enough! If you'd left it to me we'd have struck the trail days ago. But you were always arguing and suggesting. You know everything. You always do, confound you!" He stopped dead and stood glaring at the other.

Webb stopped too. "Don't you bully me!" he cried.

"Bah! I'm sick of you and your infernal talk!"

"Well! Cut it out and go your own way, you surly lout!"

Branstowe stepped forward threateningly. The whole six months of irritation and hardships surged up before him. He hated the protesting, arguing, confidential little brute. They had been forced to live together. But why should they starve together? Starve! When there was in Webb's pack a scrap of paper worth thousands. There was food there, too, worth even more than the unclaimed thousands.

Anger and hatred surged up in his heart. Quick as thought he suddenly raised his fist and struck at the man before him. It was not a powerful blow, for both the men were exhausted, but it was sufficient to knock Webb to the ground.

For a second Webb was too startled to do anything. Then he staggered to his feet and gripped his rifle. But he was not quick enough. Branstowe had anticipated him. There was a sharp report, a flash, and Webb fell over backwards and lay still, with his knees drawn up, a thin red stream trickling out of his neck and eating its way into the snow by his side.

Branstowe drew in his breath sharply, looked around him as if half expecting someone to step out of the fearful desolation and loneliness, and then stooped down and unfastened the dead man's pack. He took out a dirty envelope of papers and a still dirtier chunk of hard bread. He transferred them both to his own pack, turned on his heel, and strode savagely away, rage still burning in his heart.

A hundred yards further on he glanced back. He could see two black dots in a vast white wilderness. They were the dead man's knees protruding above the level of the snow.

He gave a queer, strained laugh, which sounded vague and distant in the awful

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silence. Then he turned round again and bent his steps towards the jagged line of mountains in the northern sky.

II.

Across the interminable stretch of snow came a man. He limped painfully. His eyes were bloodshot, the skin was drawn tightly across his cheek bones; his head was bent forward, chin on breast. He was well-nigh spent, and at times he stumbled and fell. Each time he fell it became increasingly difficult to rise again, and the desire to lie still became greater and greater. For days he had fought against death. It seemed an eternity since he had eaten food. The last occasion he could distinctly remember was when he had chewed at the leather straps which supported his pack.

From time to time he raised his head and looked mechanically at the distant mountains ahead. In some way this habit had become second nature to him. He had lost all sense of direction days ago, but he still kept plodding on towards the rising land to the north.

After a while his feet began to pain him, and once he sat down, tried to remove his boots and get at his toes, and then gave it up as a task requiring too much exertion. Thereafter he could feel the sinews of his feet and ankles begin to stiffen, until every step he took sent a spasm of pain running up his legs. Other pains began to break out all over his body. He gave up occasionally, rubbing his nose and cheeks, and a dull, throbbing pain broke out there; the pain in his stomach, which days before had started as hunger, had now become a gnawing, tearing sensation, which almost bent him double.

Still he plodded on. Night descended, and the Northern lights crept out of the greyness and danced fantastically overhead, adding to the feeling of unearthliness into which his pain had driven him. All night he stumbled along, falling and regaining his feet, sometimes even crawling, but always on and on. . . .

When dawn came much of the pain had gone. A feeling of numbness was creeping over his body, but, strange to say, his brain had cleared. He remembered many things—details of his youth. He saw his mother and the quaint little country church to which she used to take him on Sundays. He caught again long-forgotten glimpses of the religious side of his earlier years. The quieter phases of his life came back to him. He knew that the end was drawing near—and he was thankful.

He wanted rest now. He was no longer afraid of Death. He sat down in the snow—it was less sitting than merely letting his knees collapse under him.

As he crouched there, however, waiting for unconsciousness, he suddenly grew afraid. Away in the distance he saw two black dots—infinitely remote . . . Good God! Something, some force had all the while been bringing his footsteps back to the murdered man, who lay a week's journey away. A week's journey! And yet he was within sight of the body again—the two knees jutting up in a sheet of unbroken whiteness.

He tried to rise to his feet, and fell over limply on one side. After a painful struggle he managed to regain his sitting position, and remained thus, breathing heavily.

Then his brain cleared again, and he returned in memory to the peace of his youth. A strange sense of littleness pervaded him. He wanted to confide in someone, to tell of the crime he had committed.

Confession! The thought seized him. With a superhuman effort he twisted sideways, and groped for his pack. After an interminable struggle he obtained a scrap of paper, torn from an envelope, and a blunt inch-and-a-half of pencil. He spread the paper on his knee and wetted the pencil. The shadow of the murdered man seemed to be looking over his shoulder.

"I, George Branstowe," he wrote, "dying, confess that I murdered Harry Webb for his claim and his food."

With increasing difficulty he managed to sign it. Then he folded the paper, returned it to his pack, and closed his eyes with a sigh.

After a while he opened them again. In the distance he could still see the two black dots of his victim's knees.

He made another effort to rise, failed, fell over on his face, and lay quite still.

The two black spots in the snow grew nearer and nearer. Sometimes they were in front of one another, sometimes almost together, sometimes wide apart to the side, but always moving.

Towards sunset they came within a dozen yards of Branstowe's body, nearly passed it unnoticed, and then suddenly stopped.

"Hel-*lo!*" cried one of them. He hurried forward, turned the body on its back, felt over the region of the heart and whistled. "By Jove! He's alive!"

The other man stooped and investigated, too. "It's touch and go!" he said.

Between them they raised the body, and commenced the journey back to the hut, three miles away to the south, and hidden by a drift of snow.

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III.

Branstowe regained consciousness two days later.

His eyes opened, watched for a moment a beam of sunlight running slantwise through a darkened corner, and then closed again. The interest claimed by such a phenomenon was unworthy of the effort it required.

Presently, however, curiosity stirred in his numbed brain. He reopened his eyes, found the range of view limited to merely the sunbeam and a pile of logs, and shifted his head. The movement widened his field of view so much that he saw a rusty iron stove, a gun, a rough deal table, a couple of chairs, some coats hanging on the wall, a pair of moccasins, and a pack lying just under the shadow of the table.

He watched the pack lazily for some time. As he watched it idle curiosity was replaced by dawning memory. He knew nothing of the room and its contents, but he seemed to be familiar with the pack. He raised himself slightly on his elbow, and suddenly recognised the object as his own.

He began to piece things together. He tried to work out just how he had got into an uncomfortable and dirty bed in totally unfamiliar surroundings. The effort of thought was difficult, so he lay back and closed his eyes to facilitate matters. Out of the self-created darkness came a vision of dazzling white snow with himself struggling wearily on and on. He tried to remember why he had been plodding along in such an endless desolation, and whither his footsteps had been making. Beyond the vague idea of a distant jagged mountain chain beckoning him onwards he could get no farther.

Then he had the idea that he had been trying to escape something. But what? He opened his eyes as if to seek inspiration from the pack. They rested there a moment, and then, wandering haphazard across the floor, fell on the gun standing in the corner.

Suddenly his whole memory was wide awake. He saw the murdered man. He saw his knees grotesquely jutting up through the snow. He saw himself day and night hurrying away from the sight, through a vast, interminable, white wilderness. He saw himself becoming weaker and weaker. Then he remembered the last scene, seeking solace in a written confession of his guilt, trying to make peace with his Creator before he slipped into unconsciousness.

And he had not died, after all! For a moment he viewed the fact cynically. Then the written evidence of his guilt came back to him.

Good heavens! Suppose his rescuer had discovered it!

The thought sent a sudden wave of energy through him. With a painful abruptness he sat up in bed, threw out a leg, paused a moment from giddiness, and then scrambled out on to the floor. He was much too weak to stand, but he managed to reach the pack, drag it on to the bed and feverishly unbuckle the leather straps.

He searched through its contents. The claim was there, but not the scrap of paper on which he had scribbled that damning confession. He went through everything again and then through his coat and trousers, which were lying on the end of the bed. Unsatisfied with this, he went through the pockets of the other coats in the room. His excitement had lent him a new lease of energy, and he found that he could now stand and walk. It certainly pained him to do so, but that mattered little.

The search over, he went to the door and tried to open it. It was locked. The discovery nearly overwhelmed him. He had been imprisoned while his rescuer went for the sheriff!

For a moment he stood still, uncertain what to do, his eyes roaming the room for a chance of escape. They alighted on a chopper lying amongst a pile of logs. He picked it up and went towards the door; then changed his mind, dressed hurriedly, pausing at times for breath, and, finally, attacked the window on the opposite side of the hut. In spite of his weakness, it crumpled up like matchwood, and the escape thus afforded calmed him a little.

Crossing over to the bed he prepared to re-fasten his pack, but, struck by a thought, left it and went in search of food. He found a large piece of raw bacon, some mouldy cheese, and some bread. He confiscated the whole lot, placed them in the pack, fastened it over his shoulders and stepped towards the window.

Then he remembered the gun. There was more than a possibility of pursuit. He would, at least, be prepared for it.

He opened the breach, found it was loaded, discovered half-a-dozen more cartridges in a cupboard, lifted the gun through the window, and then painfully followed it into the soft crunching snow outside.

IV.

Towards sunset one of the occupants of the hut returned.

He unlocked the door and entered. At a glance he took in the empty bed, the broken window, the litter of glass and wood. Next, he discovered the gun was missing and, still later, the whole of the food—by far the most serious aspect.

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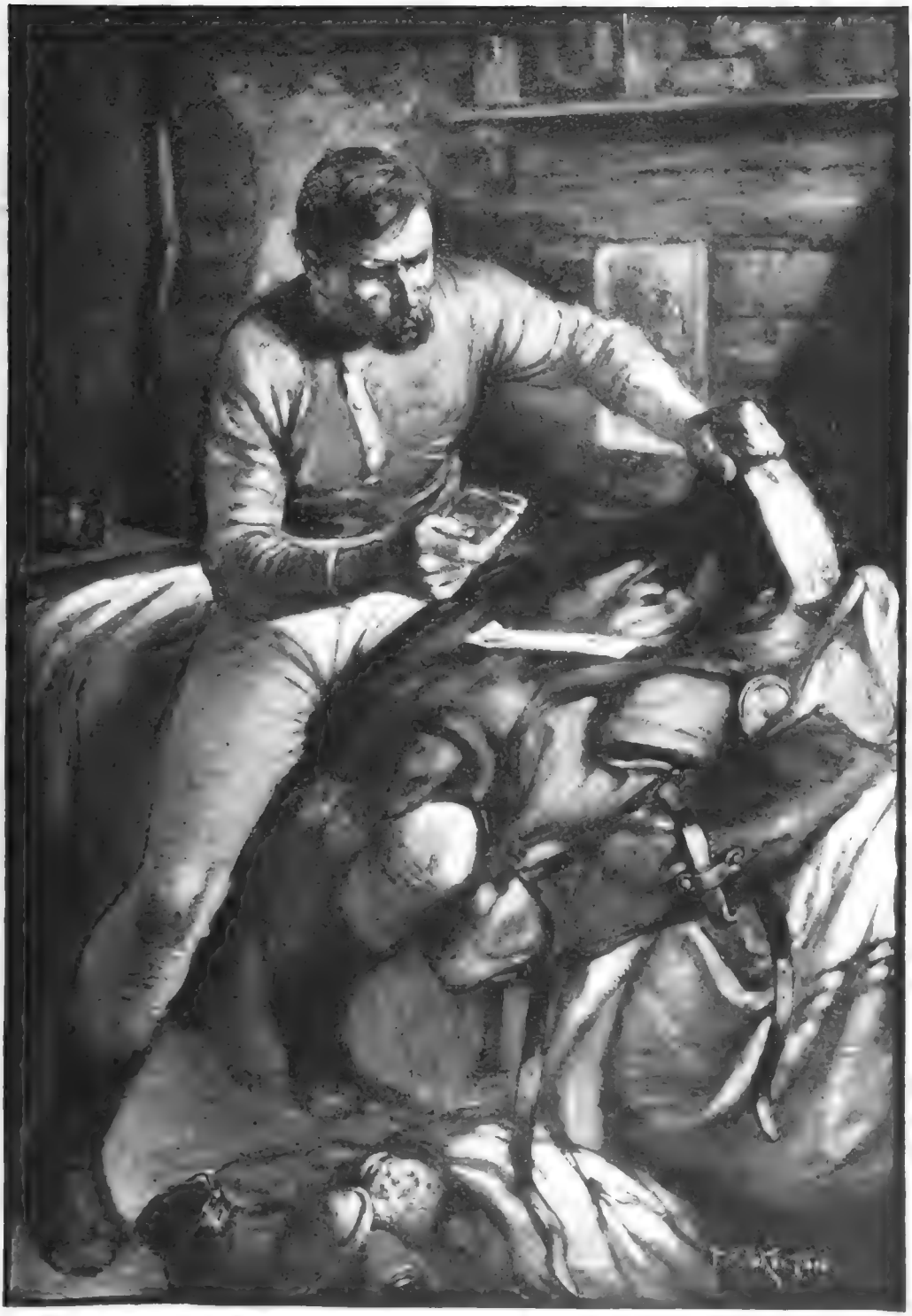

He . . . managed to reach the pack, drag it on to the bed and feverishly unbuckle the leather straps. He searched through its contents. The claim was there, but not the scrap of paper on which he had scribbled that damning confession.

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He left the hut again, went round to the window, followed up the trail of the fugitive for a mile or more, and at last gave it up owing to the growing darkness. Then he returned to the hut once more, and, after a copious drink of water, philosophically went to sleep on the vacated bed.

Early next morning his companion returned with food. They ate ravenously, and then, after discussing the situation, decided to set out in pursuit.

They followed the trail for the whole of the morning, particularly noticing the increasing frequency with which their quarry had fallen. Each succeeding time the struggle to rise again had evidently been greater and greater.

About mid-afternoon they observed a dark object in the distance, and presently came up to Branstowe's body, lying face downwards in the snow, the arms spread-eagled out, the gun lying a short distance away.

They turned him on his back. He was dead—frozen rigid into the position in which he had fallen.

"Why the devil he should have wanted to cut and run, beats me?" said one of the men.

"He was afraid of something," suggested the other. "He must have been as weak as a kitten." He stooped down to unfasten the pack. "Who was he, anyway?" he grunted as he unbuckled the strap.

"Lord knows! . . . Anything in there?"

The other discovered an envelope containing some papers. He unfolded them and glanced through their contents.

"Seems to be a claim. Harry Webb. No address known, apparently. Rum! . . . Anything else there?"

"No! . . . Some of the bacon still left, though!"

"Right ho! Bring it along! We'll be getting back. It's no use waiting here." He stooped down and picked up the gun. "Ungrateful beggar!" he muttered. "After the way we'd nursed him! Can't understand it!"

They turned their footsteps back on the trail again.

The hut was reached late that evening, but not too late for them to try and elucidate the mystery of the man's sudden departure.

"I wonder if he's left anything behind him?" occurred to one of them.

"Shouldn't think so. He'd only got his pack when we found him."

Suddenly something under the shadow of the bed claimed his attention.

"Hullo! What's that?"

He stooped down and picked up a scrap of dirty paper. Straightening it out on his knee, he tried to read it.

"*I, George Branstowe, d . . .*" it began, and then trailed off into a jagged line. The pencil had either been too blunt to finish the message, or else its writer too weak.

"It looks as if he'd intended leaving a note, and then thought better of it," said one of the men.

The other looked at the shaky scrawl again, shook his head doubtfully, and then, folding the paper double, used it as a spill for lighting his neglected pipe.

"We'd better patch up that window," he said, after a thoughtful pause. "It blows jolly cold. He might have waited until we'd returned, instead of damaging the property like that!"

SONG OF THE SUBALTERN.

I want to stroll down Bond Street—
  Lord! what memories it brings!—
I want to see shop windows
  Full of flimsy, useless things;
Rosy pink and pale blue mysteries—
  P'r'aps you know the kind I mean?—
(Are boudoir caps still in fashion?
  Do they still wear *crêpe-de-Chine?*)

I long for Piccadilly,
  And its crowd of lovely girls,
With their neat, silk-stockinged ankles
  And their captivating curls;
With their thin, delicious blouses,
  Dreams of silk and filmy net—
(Are pink nighties still in fashion?
  Do they still wear *crêpe Georgette?*)

Dorothy Rose.

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Has the War Killed Snobbery?

If snobbery is not dead, it is at least tottering to its fall, for the war has worked wonders in promoting a happier understanding between different classes of society. In the following article Miss Berta Ruck, the popular author, traces the downfall of that detestable sin, which a common anxiety and sorrow have done so much to root out.

By

Berta Ruck.

"Snobbery," says some writer, "means the cultivation of the wrong standards of value."

It means prizing a thing of beauty for what it has cost, like the *nouveau riche* collector who shows you not the exquisite little vase he has just bought, but the receipt of the cheque for £500 which he paid for it. That's money-snobbery. It means valuing our friends for "who" they are, instead of for "what" they are; it means being charmingly insincere to some dull and pompous woman because she is a countess' niece, and forgetting to call upon the doctor's bright little wife because she is "not quite a lady, my dear; her father kept a shop."

That's class-snobbery.

They tell us the war has killed snobbery, and so, to a great extent it has, but not entirely, as a curious little incident, witnessed the other night at the theatre, goes to prove. Two upper circle seats in front of me were occupied by a sailor and his sweetheart, the girl, a dainty-looking little creature, who might have been a War Office clerk; the young man, the best type of A.B., with a bronzed intelligent face and a dark blue and white medal ribbon across the breast of his jumper. The young couple were talking quietly together, their behaviour a pattern for that of any *fiancés* in a public place. The two seats next to theirs were empty. Presently, as the house filled, there entered another couple, a rather "important" looking lady, and a young man, probably her son, in Naval uniform with curly gold braid about the cuff.

This second couple stared at the numbers of their seats; they glared at the young

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blue-jacket; yes, glared with amazement and disgust upon their faces. Without hearing the actual words they said one could perfectly follow the trend of their thoughts.

"What? Put to sit next to a common sailor? It's disgraceful. . . . I shall protest. Attendant!"

The black-frocked programme-girl came up, shaking her head. "I can't help it, sir; nothing to do with me."

Blushing mortification showed in the face of the lass that loved the sailor; the boy with the medal-ribbon, cruelly embarrassed, rose from his seat. But even as he made a movement towards the officer, the important new-comers had bustled indignantly out. Perhaps it was to change their seats, perhaps to forfeit them, rather than suffer loss of dignity by spending several hours in such close proximity to a playgoer from the lower deck. For the rest of the evening those seats remained empty; for the rest of the evening, too, I felt that the enjoyment of two young people had been dashed by this exhibition of inconsiderate and unsportsmanlike snobbery. And I hope that the young officer in question may chance to read this story, for it's a true one.

But the story itself is not the answer to the question, "Has the War Killed Snobbery?"

Since the night of the raid, which sent the exclusive Mrs. Smith flying to take refuge in the cellar of an utter stranger, that lady has shed her snobbery and discovered that the neighbours she once despised are well worth knowing.

The answer is supplied by public opinion regarding such an incident. I have told the story to a number of Service people, and always their comments have been in the same strain: "How perfectly absurd! Who would have thought of seeing such behaviour nowadays?" One friend of mine quoted her husband, a Major, who had been "delighted" to find himself sitting next to some wounded Tommies at the cinema during the exhibition of the Somme films, and had found an added interest in chatting to them of the experiences that they had shared at the Front.

Another criticism came from an old staff-officer, who said quietly: "An R.N. officer would have sat down by the man without thinking about it. It was only because he was not a *pukka* Naval officer that he thought it necessary to make such a fuss!" But nobody, I am sure, would receive this verdict with greater fury than the sportsmanlike majority of our R.N.R. and R.N.V.R. officers!

This story points a moral by being such a startling exception to the rule that obtains to-day. To-day, amidst the chaos and peril, the epic struggles of the great war, Englishmen are brothers as they have never been before. Out in the trenches they live—knowing that each moment may be their last!—under conditions that sweep aside the wrong standard of snobbery. In our New Armies a captain may have been an obscure bank clerk, and a Trooper may be an Honourable; the point is not "Is he a gentleman?" but "Is he a man?"

And isn't it curious that the war has done more to destroy class-hatred than all the dreams of all the Socialists put together? Never before has there been so much mutual understanding and respect between what used to be called the Masses and the Classes. Both have given of their best. The great house set among ancestral elms, the little house standing in some back street in Poplar—each has sent out its sons to share the peril, the hardship, and the glory of saving England. "Cook's son, Duke's son," each pay tribute to the other. How often one hears from the officers: "The men, of course, are splendid!" And from

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Many girls who were never allowed to "mix" with people in their neighbourhood are now working at munitions and "mixing" with all sorts and conditions of other munition makers, from peeresses to former maids-of-all-work.

the men: "Our officers, you know, are first-rate!"

One of our nurses told me that on her "Blighty-bound" hospital ship there are often complaints at the difference between the food issued for the wounded "Tommy" and the daintier fare provided for his officer and fellow-patient. What? The "Tommies" grumble at that? Oh, no. It is the officers who object.

"Take away this tray, Sister," a Captain with a bandaged head said to her. "I'm jolly well not going to eat a proper lunch with courses if it doesn't go round for my men, thanks. I'll just have a cup of cocoa and a sandwich with the rest of 'em. If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me."

In this simple phrase I think there lay the secret that sent his men to follow that young Captain into the very lines of those Germans who are driven, not led, by officers from Prussia, that stronghold of snobbery gone mad.

It has been said that women were always far worse snobs than any man could ever be. Certainly there have been very bad sinners in that respect before the war. Particularly in the suburbs! Did we not all know (by sight, of course) the immaculate lady who made a point of "not knowing anybody in the neighbourhood, my dear," and of "not allowing her girls to mix with any of the people at the local tennis club," and of "not bringing up her daughters to *do* anything, of course; they will not need to!"

What has become of that exclusive lady, Mrs. Smith, say, of "The Laurels," who never exchanged a glance with Mrs. Brown, of "The Hollies," her right-hand neighbour, or Mrs. Jones, of "The Pines," on her left? She's disappeared. She has altered so as to be unrecognisable since the epic night of a Zeppelin raid that sent her, in a Saxe-blue dressing-gown and a halo of curling-pins, flying to take refuge with people—utter strangers to her—who were fraternising over

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biscuits and sardines in the cellars of "The Cedars," just over the road.

That broke the ice. The thaw is now complete. Mrs. Exclusive-Smith has gradually given up all idea of ignoring the neighbourhood in which she lives, and has discovered that it is a place full of anxious, sympathetic fellow creatures. It doesn't seem to matter, now, which of them are "quite nice, well-connected people; the father had a big place somewhere in Buckinghamshire, but *she* married rather beneath her," and which of them is earning twenty-five shillings a week at some office. There is a common ground of interest and good fellowship.

On the Saturday afternoons when Mrs. No-longer-Exclusive Smith opens her house to the neighbourhood for the Red Cross sewing-party, the talk is nearly all of husbands, lovers, and sons at the Front, where Mrs. Smith's only boy is, too. There are notes to compare, and chances of leave to discuss, and requests for comforts for the Battery.

Then, over at "The Laburnums" there is a little war-widow to nurse and comfort, a soldier's baby to cuddle, and who is god-mother but Mrs. Smith? Thus a real, warm-hearted woman has sprung, phœnix-like, from the ashes of the late, *un*lamented suburban snob!

And her girls, who never "mixed," and who were "not brought up to do anything," what has happened to them?

Sybil, the elder, is working at munitions, and "mixes" with all sorts and conditions of other "munitioneers," from a Lady Sybil in her own right to a Sybil Harris who was once maid-of-all-work in a lodging-house kitchen, but who is now doing her "bit" for her country in the factory where middle-class, aristocracy, and democracy meet—yes, and respect and like each other, for:

"The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins."

Gladys, the younger, far from "not doing anything," is working all the hours there are as a V.A.D. in a military hospital. It's not mere pillow-smoothing, hand-holding work, either, but means floor-scrubbing, dish-washing, fetching and carrying of loaded trays, labour which in the old days this young lady would have considered impossible for anybody but a lodging-house servant.

Is there not some hope here that the "Servant Problem" may become a little less acute after the war?

The greatest drawback to domestic service was the feeling of the girls that as servants they were "looked down upon" by Society in general, and by the young ladies of the house in particular. The dread, in fact, of snobbery! But now the Miss Gladyses who may have been inconsiderate and supercilious to the Mary Janes have worked as servants themselves. They have felt quite proud of themselves for work done "almost as well as the maids at home could do it!"

A new respect has sprung up in them for the girl in cap and apron who did every day as a matter of course what was to Miss Gladys an achievement!

More than this, Miss Gladys will know from experience just how that girl in cap and apron feels when her "time off" is insufficient, and when her back aches, and when she is sent running from the basement to the top of the house on unnecessary errands. Miss Gladys should make a very different mistress of a house in consequence!

And the maids who used to look upon "the young ladies" as tyrannical incapables and to say "I'd like to see her have to turn to and do a day's work herself!" Well, now they have seen that unexpected sight, and I think a different attitude of mind towards their employers should be the result.

Long and bitter are the casualty-lists that we have to read in this war. It will be some consolation if we can add, mentally, to the end of the very last of these lists this item:

MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED, the small-minded sin of Snobbery!

"SEND US THE 'ROYAL'!"

"I need not tell you how fond of the ROYAL we are out here, and we certainly do revel in your theatrical features."

This is only one of the many appreciative comments of the fighting men who look to the ROYAL to cheer up their dull moments, and to you to see that they get it.

Your part is so simple. Just hand as many copies of the ROYAL as you can collect over the counter at any post-office. They must be clean and in good condition, but without wrapping of any kind. They cannot be sent to any particular soldier or sailor, but will be distributed among the troops to the very best advantage.

"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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All these animals were savage and unmanageable until they were taken in hand by——

A SCHOOL FOR SAVAGES.

By Margaret Chute.

——Lieutenant Mike Rimington, who reforms the four-footed rakes of the Army.

Until Lieutenant Rimington undertook the reclamation of Army horses and mules at Underdale Hall, near Shrewsbury, the usual remedy for unruly animals was a bullet through the brain. The following article—illustrated from photographs taken with Lieutenant Rimington's own camera—gives a good idea of how both horses and mules are won back to docility and usefulness by the kindness and marvellous understanding of the man who never uses a whip.

Once there was a mule called Savage Simon. And Savage Simon was the worst mule in England, if not in Creation. The world had been harsh with him, and in return he treated the world to the strongest type of harshness à mule knows. Result—it took twenty men to hold Savage Simon; he was unrideable, undriveable, unmanageable, and in order to be shod he had to be put in the stocks, with a vast amount of work and hoof-dodging on the part of many heated men.

"Useless and dangerous," said those in authority. "A nice little bullet in his brain is the only thing for Savage Simon." And then someone more humane than the rest said:

"Send him to Underdale Hall Stables and see what Lieutenant Rimington can do with him!"

The high road from Shrewsbury runs along past cottages and fields till it skirts a low, long house, standing in a big, grassy paddock. The wooden gate is always open, chickens stroll on the verandah, ducks waddle on the gravel drive, and out in the stables behind the house Lieutenant Mike Rimington has his School for Savages—a reformatory for the worst rakes in the British Army!

They walk on four feet, not two, these impossible, condemned creatures. If Underdale Hall did not exist, if Lieutenant Rimington

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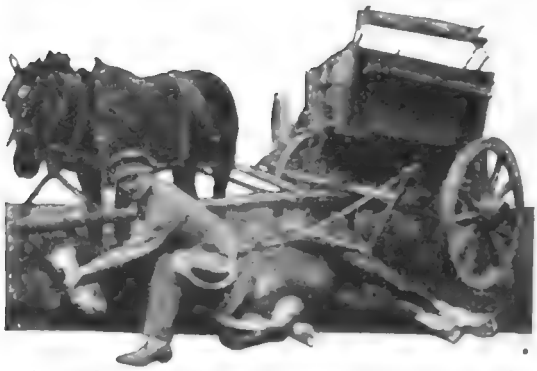

Savage Simon objected to harness, and finally lay down and refused to budge——

had not come back wounded from France, and taken up this labour of reclaiming rakes under the direction and control of the Remount Department, every horse or mule that has lived in peace in this haven would have been shot ages ago. Instead of which, many of these creatures after months of kindness and training are now back in the Army, doing their bit in France or England.

Along that road from Shrewsbury came Savage Simon one fine day, escorted by a terrified, trembling groom. At the gate of the stables stood a tall man with a stern face and kind eyes, wearing a khaki shirt and riding-breeches. A cigarette swung between his lips, his hands hung empty at his sides—and so he greeted Savage Simon, the mule who was to have died.

It took an hour of coaxing and cajolery—without the use of any weapon save kind hands and a soothing voice—to get that mule inside the stable-yard. But the deed was done; for this man, who knows and understands the souls of four-footed animals as men seldom understand even their fellow citizens, has a will of iron. If a horse or mule is to do a thing, that thing *must* be done—even for a second—if it takes hours and hours of desperate work and unslackening will-power.

The result is that the next day, when lesson-time comes round again, that thing will be done in a shorter time, and will last for two or three seconds! And so, after weeks of work, a command is obeyed by a lawless, rebellious animal as soon as it is spoken. That is the system on which this unique trainer and tamer of savage horses works.

And Savage Simon? Well, he arrived in the stable-yard and promptly began kicking at everything in sight. Close to him, judging and dodging every kick or strike of those wicked hoofs, stood the man who meant to tame him.

"All right, all right," he repeated again and again. "It's all right; we're not going to hurt you. Kick if you feel like it; *I* don't mind. I want you to go out into that paddock—you'll find a pal out there—oh, very well, stay here for a bit if you like it better!"

Beyond the stable-yard, with its loose-boxes, big pump, and brick hedge, is a large field containing three jumps of different heights and kinds, an army waggon, and a pond. Into that paddock Savage Simon, the criminal, eventually was enticed.

——so he was left in the field all night, inflicting considerable damage on the waggon, but becoming strangely docile by the morning. He is now back in the Army hard at work.

"And there," so Lieutenant Rimington finishes the story, "he found an old mare—a friendly, gentle old soul, who had been with me for months. When she came she

Big Push was sent from Edinburgh to be reformed, as he refused to pull in harness, and reared viciously when mounted——

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was the worst case I've dealt with, and now, after patience and training, she will do anything I tell her. She knows she can trust me; she knows I understand, and that is the whole secret of relationship between man and beast. When newcomers arrive I let them loose in the paddock with her and let her talk to them.

"I always hope in my heart that she tells them I'm not such a bad sort of fellow in my own way, that I never carry a whip or stick —there isn't one in the whole place—that I never wear spurs, that I don't hit or kick for no reason, or tug on a tender mouth till the agony of it is unbearable—in short, that I *understand*. And when it is time to put the stranger into a loose-box he goes without much bother, because the old mare has told him that things are not as bad as they seem, and that some two-legged creatures do possess a little sense!"

After some days Savage Simon, the mad mule, consented to have harness placed upon him, and was attached to the Army waggon, which is used for varied purposes, side by side with a horse nearly through its "taming" and ready to go back to the Army. But

This horse showed the most vicious temper on arrival, kicking and rearing when anyone mounted him. Now he allows Lieutenant Rimington to stand on his back.

—A few days at Underdale Hall worked wonders, and he is here seen (on left) behaving like a perfect gentleman.

Savage Simon did not take kindly either to harness or the waggon—doubtless for very excellent reasons of his own. He trotted a few steps, after some wild plunges, then lay down and refused to budge. When a mule refuses to budge no amount of argument or force is the slightest use. To start with, a mule is 80 per cent. stronger than any horse, and, in addition, it knows its own mind, from which nothing will swerve it.

"Very well," said Lieutenant Rimington, "if you *want* to lie in the field all night you may." So the horse was unharnessed and sent back to the warmth and food in its stable, while Savage Simon, looking fiendish, remained lying by the shaft of the waggon all through the night. And when Lieutenant Rimington went along to investigate the following morning, he found

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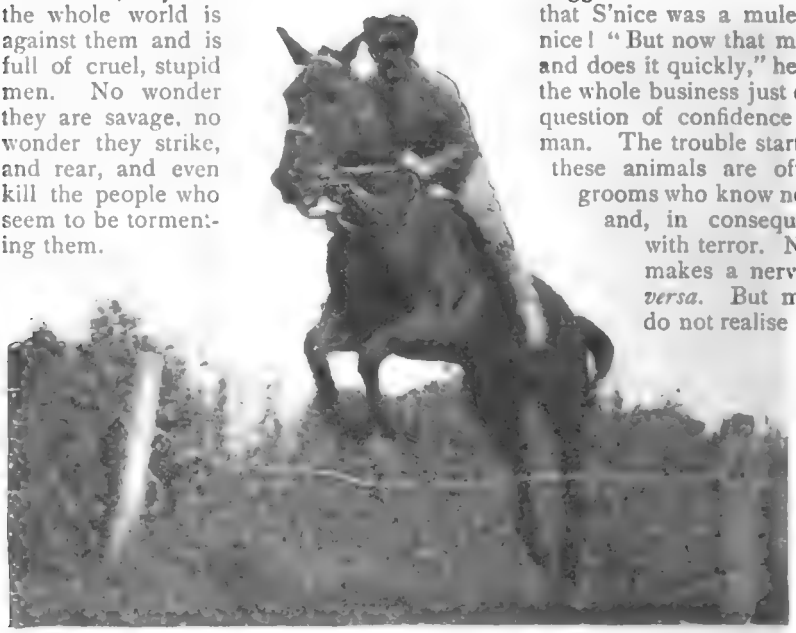
Savage Simon strangely docile—but the front of the waggon was kicked to bits!

"Repairing it took some weary hours," confessed the man whose patience seems unlimited. "But I won the day, for Savage Simon never lay down again, in harness, and gave up kicking waggons of any kind when out on business. He is now back in the Army hard at work, and I get excellent reports of him from time to time."

Lieutenant Rimington coaxing a mule who has just bucked him off, so that they may be on good terms before he remounts.

The story of Savage Simon is set out in detail in this way because it is a typical example of Lieutenant Rimington's work. Every horse or mule sent to him is unmanageable on arrival; that is the reason they are sent to his "school." When they first arrive he is the only individual who goes near them, or speaks to them, or gives them food. Then, by degrees, as their terror vanishes, the three lady-grooms working at Underdale Hall are allowed to do their share of training. But the bulk of it is one man's work!

When they arrive, these rakes, shaggy, wild-eyed, often unshod because no man can approach them, with petrified grooms in attendance, they feel the whole world is against them and is full of cruel, stupid men. No wonder they are savage, no wonder they strike, and rear, and even kill the people who seem to be tormenting them.



Black Bess was reported quite unsafe to ride, but she will now do anything, even to jumping wire—the most difficult of all jumps, especially for a mule.

One day not long ago I was allowed to spend some hours at Underdale Hall to watch Lieutenant Rimington at work, and learn from him his methods of taming and reclamation. Out in the stable-yard two lady-grooms were busy harnessing a horse called Crippen—well-named, for he was a murderer, though not by intention. Before being sent to "school" Crippen had killed a groom with a single kick, and now he was allowing two girls to harness him, and eating sugar, or "love"—generally known as oats—from their hands.

Over by the open door of a stable Lieutenant Rimington was talking gently, but firmly, to a certain horse called Yellow Peril, a positive devil once, but now on the high road to respectability.

"When you've got that harness on Crippen," he directed, "put him in the waggon with S'nice." To me he explained that S'nice was a mule, once anything but nice! "But now that mule does anything—and does it quickly," he added. "You see, the whole business just comes to this—it is a question of confidence between horse and man. The trouble starts with the fact that these animals are often in the care of grooms who know nothing about horses, and, in consequence, regard them with terror. Now, a nervous man makes a nervous horse and *vice versa*. But men without training do not realise this. Consequently they treat a horse or a mule as they would treat a bicycle, and thus the need for a training stable like this arises.

"The first instinct of an ignorant, untrained man in dealing with a horse is to hit the animal

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with the heaviest whip or stick available. Failing a blow, a good hard kick seems the finest way of 'managing the brute.' It takes very little thought to picture the end of this treatment. The horse becomes savage, the man grows more and more afraid, but will not admit his fear; and, instead of treating the terrified animal in a human, humane way, grows more and more brutal, till at last a certain horse or mule kills someone, or becomes so crazy with ill-treatment and sheer terror, that shooting seems the only way out. Then the wild rake is sent to me—and a little common-sense, determination, and kindness soon puts right the evil, and gives a new lease of life to a valuable animal, who never deserved to die.

"Unfortunately, I can only deal with about twenty horses here at one time. Space is limited, but that is not the only reason. I have to deal personally with my pupils, and one man cannot work beyond certain limits. I keep strict account of every horse or mule that comes here, since my first case, in January, 1916—Blazes Kate, a wild mare. In a book I enter their names and their worst faults, and against that I put down the exact amount of time I give individually to each pupil. Some have only a few hours—spread over weeks, of course—to their account. Others have undivided attention running into days. Very many pupils have passed in and out of Underdale Hall during the past year, and very few come back for a second dose of treatment."

By this time S'nice and Crippen were side by side in the waggon, Crippen looking far from pleasant. Lieutenant Rimington mounted the box, one of the lady-grooms climbed up into the waggon and I followed her, standing behind the driver.

"Let go the brake!" shouted Lieutenant Rimington. Crash went the brake and off went Crippen, tugging sideways at a frenzied gallop.

"Halt!" cried the man on the box, and like a flash those two animals, horse and mule, pulled up. "We never say 'Whoa,'" this novel schoolmaster explained. "In itself it is a nasty, nervous sound, calculated to frighten rather than soothe. Instead, we always say, 'That's all right—that's all right,' and, as I told you, our hands are the only whips in the place." Time after time S'nice and Crippen started and stopped, till their driver had induced Crippen to start straight forward instead of sideways or backwards; then that lesson was over.

Mounted on a powerful horse a lady-groom was taking a jump by the hedge. Lieutenant Rimington joined her on another horse, and they went over side by side, ending up by jumping wire—the most difficult of all jumps for horse and rider. With an ordinary quiet horse it would be a wonderful feat, and on these wild creatures—actually on a *mule*—it becomes a miracle.

When the hardest part of the day's work is over, it is time to take the "pupils" to the river—if weather permits. Horses love the water, and mules too, though Lieutenant Rimington has sad recollections of one unruly mule, who broke out of the paddock during the early days of his schooling, and was chased for over six miles down the river before he finally consented to return to Underdale Hall.

Such is the School for Savages, and the whole place is summed up by the simple notice fixed to the back of the grey Army waggon: "Don't take liberties with the horses. They are as human as you are."

One of the condemned animals sent to Underdale Hall as unmanageable, but now quite docile and affectionate.

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Mrs Perkins Interferes

By Roy Vickers.

"When constabulary duty's to be done,
A policeman's lot is not a happy one."

I.

"I CAN understand her wanting to do it all right," said Mrs. Baines for the tenth time, "but what beats me is that she doesn't seem to have taken any count of the risk—her an educated lady, too, and so young!"

It was nearly a week since the murder of Professor Granston had been brought to light, but it was still the favourite topic in the doorstep conferences of Pretoria Gardens, partly because it was a very sensational murder, and partly because Mansfield House, where it had taken place, was but a few streets distant.

"I asked in the grocer's yesterday what lentils might be," said Mrs. Gow. "Sort of split peas as far as I could make out. Seems a funny thing to murder a man with. But perhaps you can tell me the rights of that, Mrs. Perkins, you being almost in the Force, as you might say?"

Mrs. Perkins, the wife of the constable, eyed the group of gossipers disdainfully while she considered her reply. It was a tricky question. The dignity of the Force was thrust into her keeping. But she rose to the occasion.

"It's no good arguing about it in bits," she said. "To begin with, he was a professor, and that's a bad start for any nice young girl to get married to—always thinking about his science, and not taking any notice of his poor young wife. Led her no end of a dance, so I've heard. They couldn't keep servants—at least, not more than a single day. And then he'd get ideas about his food, which is always bad for a man to get into his head, and these here lentils was one of them. And then, what with all that poison lying about in his workshop and getting on her nerves something chronic, she decided to take her chance one day and serve it up with lentils, and I'd like to know if there's anybody here wouldn't have felt tempted in her shoes."

The explanation was plainly regarded as unsatisfactory; for such facts as Mrs. Perkins had given had already been published.

"When the case came before the Beak," volunteered Mrs. Gow, "they tried to make out that Jasper Granston, the old man's nephew, who gets half the money, had a hand in it. I bet the police are keeping an eye on him, aren't they, Mrs. Perkins?"

Mrs. Perkins fully recognised the motive that prompted Mrs. Gow's endless questioning. There had been an unfortunate incident

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not so very long ago in which their respective husbands had come into official contact, and since then Mrs. Gow had never ceased her efforts to undermine the dignity of her neighbour's position as wife of a constable.

"And how long, Mrs. Gow, ma'am," asked Mrs. Perkins with withering sarcasm, "how long do you think my husband would hold his position if I was to tell you?"

So saying she turned her back on the discomfited group and re-entered her cottage.

"*She* doesn't know," called Mrs. Baines after her. "You don't suppose they tell a common slop nothing, do you?"

Within her cottage Mrs. Perkins heard the taunt—as the speaker had intended. And, in spite of her superficial hardness, it hurt her.

Her resentment had not passed away when there came a dull, almost respectful, thump on the outer door, which she opened to admit the six feet of placid, corpulent manhood that was her husband.

"I've got something to tell you, Martha," said Perkins with slow impressiveness as he dutifully wiped his feet on the mat.

"Ho! Going to win a billiard tie up at the police club, I daresay," snapped Mrs. Perkins. "That's about all you ever have to tell me, John Perkins."

"But, Martha," protested John Perkins mildly, "it's got nothing to do with billiards. It's about the murder I'm speaking."

"Ho! About the murder, is it?" retorted Mrs. Perkins. "And a lot they'll tell a"—she hesitated at the hateful phrase of Mrs. Baines', and added—"a man in your place. Well, why don't you speak out, John Perkins, instead of keeping me wondering my head off?"

Perkins was about to protest against the injustice of the question, but thought better of it.

"Martha, I'm on duty at Mansfield House six o'clock to-morrow morning," he announced instead.

There was a long-drawn "Oh!" of gratification from Mrs. Perkins, which told her husband that the storm was over. John on duty outside the house—*the* house! She would see what Mrs. Baines had to say now.

"Yes. They picked me for the job all right," resumed Perkins as he divested himself of his tunic. "The Inspector says: 'Mind, Perkins!' he says, 'you'll take the keys of the house from your relief,' he says. 'But you are to admit no one on any account except he comes from the Yard,' he says!"

Now this piece of information, though true, was a quite unnecessary flourish on the part of Perkins. And it gave Mrs. Perkins an idea.

Perkins was to have the keys of the house. And his Inspector had ordered him to admit no one. But the Inspector was not the only person (as you may have divined) whom Perkins was compelled to obey.

Like a wise woman Mrs. Perkins said nothing just then. But on the following morning, about an hour after her husband had departed, she put on her bonnet and cloak and came out of the cottage.

Her neighbour, Mrs. Baines, who was already up and cleaning her doorstep, stopped in amazement on catching sight of her.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Baines," said Mrs. Perkins with the utmost cordiality. "Maybe you're thinking this is a funny time to go out. But my husband," lowering her voice, "is on this here murder case. So I says to myself, 'there's no harm in your going to the house,' I says, 'if it's only to say that you've stood in the very room where she did it.'"

Mrs. Perkins knew that she had said just enough to make the whole of Pretoria Gardens green with envy, and so went contentedly on her way.

II.

As she approached Mansfield House she caught sight of the stalwart form of her husband stolidly barring the entrance. The street was comparatively empty. She took a good look round to make sure that there was no one about who might conceivably be connected with the Force, and then marched forward resolutely.

"*You*, Martha!" exclaimed John Perkins in consternation. "There's nothing the matter, is there?"

"Matter?" snapped Mrs. Perkins. "That's a nice thing to say to your lawful wedded wife when she's just come to have a look round, which it's little enough in the way of sight-seeing I get since I married you, John Perkins."

"Sight-seeing!" echoed Perkins, bewildered. "There's no sights about here, as far as I can see, Martha."

"Don't talk like a perfect fool more than you can help," retorted his wife. "You've got the keys, haven't you?"

It was then that the awful truth dawned on John Perkins.

"But, Martha," he exclaimed at last, "you don't mean that you want me to let you go into the house?"

"What else d'you think I've come for, pray?" demanded Mrs. Perkins, holding out her hand for the keys. "A lot of harm it'll do for me to go in and just have a look round, which if you were a loving husband, same as what you say you are, you'd be glad for me to have the chance."

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"It's enough to get me dismissed the Force!" gasped John Perkins. "Why, suppose that the Inspector was to come along?"

"If the Inspector comes along," said Mrs. Perkins firmly, "you leave him to me."

Now, although he was not really a shirker, the prospect of being dismissed the Force as the direct and incontestable fault of his wife was not without its attractive side for John Perkins. Moreover, it must be admitted that he was not particularly fond of the Inspector, and his rather dull brain conceived a fascinating picture of his wife setting to work on that official in real earnest. Wherefore, with a covering protest, he handed over the keys of the house.

"Stop talking like a fool and reach me that pepper-box on the end of the mantelpiece there," ordered Mrs. Perkins. Her husband pressed his anatomy against the gas-stove and stood on tip-toe. "I don't think," he grunted . . . "that I can manage it."

Mrs. Perkins took the keys contentedly, and passed through the gate in the brick wall which surrounded the diminutive garden. There she paused for an instant and peered through the French windows of the dining-room which opened on to the unmowed patch of grass.

"That's the room where she did it," she exclaimed delightedly. "And I shall be standing in it in half-a-minute.

Once inside the house she was surprised to find that the hall was neatly kept. She went at once to the dining-room and stood looking round her with a deep sense of awe.

"And to think that she sat at this very table, and watched him eating the poison what she'd put in his dinner!" she exclaimed with a shiver. "Well, if that doesn't beat Madame Toosord's hollow!"

She examined the very ordinary furniture of the room as if each fresh piece might yield some gruesome interest of its own. Presently her eye lighted upon an excellently coloured picture of a beautiful young girl, with big, appealing eyes of softest brown.

"So that's her!" muttered Mrs. Perkins, who had studied the picture in the Press. "My! She doesn't look to me as she'd have the sense to do it!"

Having given the sensation of creepiness time to exhaust itself, Mrs. Perkins left the dining-room and commenced a tour of inspection through the house.

The house was well furnished,

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and more than once Mrs. Perkins noticed with approval that everything had been kept in excellent order.

"No one could have called her a slattern, whatever else she was," she soliloquised as she left the upper regions and descended to the kitchen, which, as the place in which the fatal lentil mash had been made, was second only in importance to the dining-room.

And here for a moment she almost forgot the murder in her admiration of the gas cooking-stove. The stove stood beside the big old-fashioned coal-fire range, and it was such a stove as housewives dream of. It seemed to be fitted with every possible convenience.

"Well, she might have kept this clean, anyhow!" mused Mrs. Perkins, her sympathy for the accused woman evaporating as she saw a discolouring mess upon the grill.

She examined the mess closely, resentfully, and then started back with an exclamation.

"Bless my soul, if it isn't the very lentils themselves!"

Mrs. Perkins pictured the scene quite vividly. In fancy she saw the youthful Mrs. Granston, in pursuance of her fell purpose, taking a saucepan from the rack, measuring the proper amount of lentils into the saucepan, adding the water—and then Mrs. Perkins' fancy picture was suddenly blurred.

"What in the name of goodness did she want to go and boil the mash on the grill for?" she demanded of herself. "A girl that knows how to keep everything proper, same as this house is, knows enough not to do a silly thing like that."

She glanced round the room as if seeking an answer to her own question. Her eye fell upon the high mantelpiece over the big, old-fashioned range.

"Lot of good having a mantel up there where no one can reach it," she muttered disdainfully. Her housewifely contempt for the architect who could make such a mantelpiece momentarily blotted out her interest in the grill—until the mantelpiece itself forced her attention back to the problem.

Standing on the board just above the gas-stove was a pepper-pot, a japanned tin, and a box of matches.

"I knew she couldn't have boiled it on the grill," cried Mrs. Perkins excitedly, as she hurried from the kitchen, "no more than she could have put the pepper-box and matches *and* the lentils on that there mantelpiece when she'd done with them!"

In spite of her discovery, she was quite self-possessed as she opened the front door.

"John," she called from the door-step, "I want you. Come here a minute."

"I daren't leave my point, Martha," her husband called back wretchedly. "I'm on duty."

"Do you hear me, John Perkins?" cried his wife: "You'll do your duty best by doing as you're told."

With a gesture of helplessness, John Perkins obeyed.

"Come on — inside. Quick!" commanded Mrs. Perkins, seizing him firmly by the sleeve and urging him towards the kitchen. "This way."

In the kitchen she faced her husband with folded arms. Before proceeding further she wanted to be sure of her facts.

"Now just tell me this, if you can," she said. "As far as I understand it, the whole thing turns on her having cooked the lentil mash herself and put the poison in; doesn't it?"

"It does, Martha," replied Perkins sententiously.

"Before the magistrate her solicitor tried to pretend that she hadn't. She said that she had a bad headache on the morning in question and kept to her room except when she came down to send the odd-man to that vegetable restaurant round the corner for the mash, as she wasn't well enough to make it herself. That was all right enough, and she proved it—only we found all the food that came from the restaurant in the dustbin, so the old man couldn't have had it, anyhow."

"Then why did she send to the restaurant," demanded Mrs. Perkins, "if it was only to waste good food?"

"That's what we call 'a blind,' Martha," he replied sagely. "She did it thinking it would mislead us. And now I'll get back to my point. You'll get me dismissed the Force——"

"Stop talking like a fool and reach me that pepper-box on the end of the mantelpiece there," ordered Mrs. Perkins.

Her husband pressed his anatomy against the gas-stove and stood on tip-toe.

"I don't think," he grunted, as he touched the pepper-box with his finger-tips, "that I can manage it. Ugh! Just done it. But, Martha, you—you're not going to pinch it?" he asked in a terrified whisper.

Without deigning to answer, Mrs. Perkins placed a kitchen chair against the gas-stove.

"Up you jump, John," she ordered, "and put it back just where it was. You'll see the marks made by the dust."

Perkins, reluctantly and with no little danger, mounted the chair.

"Stop that puffing and blowing, stupid, else you'll lay all the dust," she added, and John Perkins ponderously obeyed her,

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wondering whether his wife had taken leave of her senses.

"Now listen to me," commanded Mrs. Perkins, as her husband descended perilously from his perch. "How tall is this Mrs. Granston?"

"Not much taller than what you are, Martha," replied Perkins. "I saw her when they brought her to the Station."

"Ho!" exclaimed Mrs. Perkins triumphantly. "Funny way to make a lentil mash—standing on a step-ladder—isn't it?"

Perkins slowly removed his helmet for the purpose of scratching his head.

"Blessed if I can see what you're driving at, Martha," he muttered blankly.

"It isn't what I'm driving at," retorted Mrs. Perkins. "It's what I'm drove to—which is that that there lentil mash was cooked by someone at least two or three inches higher that what you are."

John Perkins replaced his helmet reflectively.

"That isn't evidence, anyhow," he said confidently. "How do you know that the pepper-box and the rest of it was used that day?"

"Ho! They wasn't used that day, wasn't they?" sneered Mrs. Perkins. "Then I suppose the last time Mrs. Granston finished making lentil mash she takes the lentils and the pepper-box and borrows a ladder from next door so as to put them in a nice, safe place where she can't reach them next time she wants them. And then a box of matches to look nice. Answer me that, John Perkins! Besides," she added, with true feminine inconsequence, "it isn't them things that I go by. It's the range. No woman would be such a fool as to boil a lentil mash on the grill. I'm as positive that a man cooked that lentil mash as that I stand here."

"A man!" repeated John Perkins dazedly. "A man—three inches higher than what I am! Why, the Professor's nephew is all that! I saw him up at——"

"Then he did it," propounded Mrs. Perkins curtly.

"Crikey, Martha! We must tell the Inspector——"

"Don't you swear at me, John Perkins!" snapped his wife. "And don't talk such nonsense—telling the Inspector, indeed! Why, he'll go and put a lot of them detectives in it who haven't got the sense to know that you don't boil a mash on the grill. You go back to your point, my man, else you'll get into trouble, maybe."

"But, Martha——"

"When you're off duty," she interrupted, as they returned to the hall, "you just find out that nephew's address. Then come straight home to me without saying nothing about it to no one. We're going to catch the one who did it this time."

III.

Mrs. Perkins had no intention of telling the truth to Pretoria Gardens. On the way home she rejected several sensational fabrications which flashed across her mind in favour of a course that proved far more effective.

"My lips is sealed," she announced to the neighbours who were lounging about. Then she went quickly into her cottage and shut herself in until her husband returned from duty with the address of Jasper Granston.

Jasper Granston lived in lodgings, and as they approached the house, Mrs. Perkins bade her husband wait outside.

"When he runs out," she ordered, already regarding her quarry in the light of a frightened rabbit, "you arrest him, see? That's something you *can* do on your own."

"But the warrant, Martha——" began John Perkins.

"He won't want no warrant by the time I've done with him," prophesied Mrs. Perkins.

The landlady was inclined to make difficulties at first, but a couple of minutes on the doorstep with Mrs. Perkins convinced her that there are worse things in life than losing a good lodger. Mrs. Perkins announced herself by knocking on the door of Jasper Granston's sitting-room and opening it.

"Who are you? What do you want?" demanded Jasper Granston irritably, rising to his full height of six feet four.

"I've come here," replied Mrs. Perkins, confronting him with folded arms, "to ask you if you know what a grill is?"

"The woman's mad," muttered Jasper Granston. And because he honestly believed that a mad woman had found her way into the house, he said, humouring her:

"No, I'm afraid I don't know what a grill is."

"I thought you didn't," replied Mrs. Perkins; "but allow me to tell you, Mr. Granston, that a woman *does* know what a grill is—and she knows it's not the place to cook a lentil mash on, which, seemingly, you didn't."

"Lentil mash!" he gasped, taken off his guard.

"Yes, the lentil mash you made the day you put the poison in it, I'm speaking of," went on Mrs. Perkins. "You were too clever by half, my fine friend, chucking away the stuff as came from the restaurant and all that. And if you hadn't made that little mistake about the grill, if you hadn't put the

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"Who are you?" . . . demanded Jasper Granston irritably, rising to his full height of six feet four. "I've come here," replied Mrs. Perkins, confronting him with folded arms, "to ask you if you know what a grill is?"

pepper-box *and* the tin of lentils *and* the box of matches on the mantel-board where no one couldn't reach them who wasn't a long-legged, lying, murdering blackguard——"

Mrs. Perkins never finished her sentence. For suddenly the room seemed to fade away and she thought she was asleep. In reality she had been struck on the point of the jaw.

Some five minutes had passed before she came back to consciousness, and found herself alone in the room. For during that five minutes the landlady had been too much interested watching the policeman outside securing the fugitive to worry about Mrs. Perkins.

She picked herself up contentedly and returned alone to Pretoria Gardens.

In the subsequent trial it was elicited that Jasper Granston had, on the day of the crime, entered the house by the French windows, as he had frequently done before. The Professor was in a very bad temper, told him about Mrs. Granston's illness, and fumed about being deprived of his proper food.

He did not know that Mrs. Granston had already sent to the restaurant, so to soothe his uncle, from whom he wished to ask a small loan, Jasper offered to try his hand at the lentil mash. While in the kitchen he suddenly perceived his evil opportunity; so he slipped into the laboratory, secured the poison, and—the rest has been told. It was a simple matter to throw away the food from the restaurant.

Mrs. Perkins did not know all this when she returned to Pretoria Gardens. But this did not deter her from assuming that the case was complete in every detail.

"Now!" she announced dramatically to the neighbours, "now that my husband has found the real murderer, I can safely open my mouth.

"It was like this," she said, when the first storm of half-incredulous comment had passed. "John Perkins came into the kitchen of Mansfield House this morning, and the first thing that catches his eye was the grill. 'Martha,' he said, 'it seems to me as *no woman* has been using that cooking-range,'" and so on interminably.

"I did hear that they're going to make him a full-blown detective for this little job," she finished. "Plain clothes and all that."

And Mrs. Perkins was the only one who was surprised when her words proved true.

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KINDRED SPIRITS.

By
Reese Davis James and
Laura Clayton King.

"The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow:
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow."

I.

"I say," drawled the youthful Lieutenant, passing a sealed envelope to his Captain, "here's the fourth letter from that girl near Brighton since her husband's been missing. Why don't they stop her?"

Captain Farley scarcely caught the other's words, but his hand went out automatically for the envelope proffered by his assistant. As the officer in command of the company, he had been appointed censor for the homeward-bound correspondence of his men. He had edited the hopes and fears of dozens of hearts till his own seemed leaden.

In their division of the trenches, night silence drowned above quiet fields; half the

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army lay sleeping; the other half, with bayonets pointed to the stars, dreamt as it waited.

The Captain, so young that his drawn face still reflected the radiance of ideals, sat passive a moment. But he did not need to ponder in order to recognise the subject of the Lieutenant's comment. The moment his glance fell upon that large, girlish handwriting, a subtle change transformed the walls about him into wide stretches of garden.

Though he was authorised only to examine outgoing mails, Captain Farley deliberately broke open the square envelope addressed to his Corporal, Robert Darton.

As the pages lay outspread before him, he hesitated. In fancy he pictured a low-roofed, white cottage nestled among neat hedges; through a latticed window he glimpsed a sunny room, and within, sewing some dainty fabric with daintier stitches, was the girl who had written this letter.

In reality he had never seen that English home, nor its fair mistress, but so magnetic seemed her personality that it pervaded these chronicles of daily events.

Her first letters had been shy bride-ecstasies to her husband; then their tone had deepened; about them had enfolded the mystery of creation; and at last had come a theme of expectation, quiet, exultant. But four weeks previous, in a night charge, the Corporal's body had been shattered beyond recognition.

It chanced that the one mortal who knew this fact, Captain Farley, knew also the young wife's need of protection, and had chosen to risk reprimand for oversight rather than list Darton among the dead. It had been reported to Headquarters that Corporal Darton was missing.

The younger man, though of gentle breeding, had enlisted as a private, but had speedily attained to the rank of Corporal. He had soon won his Captain's friendship by the spirit in which he had served.

The Lieutenant, with pencil poised above a letter from a son to his aged mother, jerked his thumb toward the pages outlined by the glow of his companion's candle.

"You'd think her people would let her know he's missing and stop these useless letters."

"Useless!" The Captain's dark brows met above his slightly aquiline nose. "Why, man, that fellow's body may be blown to atoms, but somewhere out there in the universe love like this is bound to reach him."

A full moon spilt its beams over cloud embankments, flooding the plain. The Lieutenant became convinced that the brilliance of his Captain's eyes was due to fever.

"Besides," continued the superior officer, "they couldn't tell her at a dime when the news might cost her life."

"It's frightful hard luck, but that's the fate of many a war bride, rumbled the other, and turned once more to his task.

The young Captain drew a deep breath and began to read the girl's missive:

My Dear One,

Aunt Lisbeth is sunning in a big chair on the lawn just outside my window. She looks very sweet and patrician in her grey little gown, with its muslin kerchief and cuffs, and her soft, white curls peeping from under a new lace cap which Cres has made for her. She wants me to tell you not to let one single home fear creep into your soldiering, because she and her girl will take care of me and see that I come back safely from my pilgrimage.

I do hope your wrist is growing stronger. I must apologise for my own uncertain handwriting, which Cres insists is becoming quite as illegible as hers, but most of the time I use the broad arm of my chair for a desk.

We are so glad to have good news of you from the Front; our hearts watch every night with you there in the trenches. Lately they will not let me do many things, so I have been operating a sort of wireless between you and me.

When my eyes first open in the morning, I regard the weather. Is it fair? Does it rain? If the sun shines, I gather in its sunbeams to flash across the world to you. If the skies frown, I send you cheery thoughts.

When you sleep on the ground, I, dear, am beside you. When you tramp weary miles, my love goes, too. When you face that awful fire, I stand close to give you courage and from you to gain it.

For, you see, after all, dear heart, the woman passes through fire; she must go without drums, very quietly, to the brink of shadowy spaces, and according to her strength she gives strength. Think of the children being born in this sad epoch! They will look back upon the present time and say, "Our father was a hero!" Will they be able to call their mother heroic also?

My beloved, I am striving to put aside the weak little me that wants you with all her heart: I am wielding the philosophy of a Spartan, and, if the sword grows heavy, I remember what you are bearing in your big man's way.

My love and faith in you forever and forever,

Jean.

Captain Farley leant back and closed his eyes, as one involuntarily does at the breaking of a powerful light, for an undreamt-of experience was enveloping him.

From boyhood he had toiled to become an engineer. Ambition had sapped the sentiment which might otherwise have bound him. He must go on and on, he had decided, must become one of England's best-known sons.

He would penetrate her farthest colonies to reclaim waste places. He would span gullies with bridges, drain marshes, level mountains. In planning all this, he had been too busy for casual pleasantries, and among these pleasantries he had catalogued the society of girls.

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Now and then, unsought, some girl had invaded the precincts of his masculine seriousness, as girls since the days of Babylon have been wont to do, but he had speedily disentangled his purpose and gone his commercial way.

Yet James Farley possessed a deep capacity for affection. It was simply a case of having set his ideal among the stars while he turned his attention to ditches.

When the war broke out, Farley had volunteered his services. As he had won something of a reputation, he had been promptly accepted. Indefatigably he had laboured and advanced. To-night, at the age of twenty-seven, James Croswell Farley was already distinguished among his fellow officers of like rank. And here in the trenches he had learnt that ideals come down among men and walk with them.

Laying the young wife's letter beside him on the rough wooden table, Captain Farley took up a fountain-pen and began to write. This was the fourth letter he had answered, one for each week since his Corporal's death:

My Dear Wife,

Even with your fine perception, you can never know what your messages, both those that come by post and those you send *via* sunbeams, have done to brighten black hours. There is no use trying to tell you of our life. My Captain, who is censor for the company, would demolish my rhetoric. However, since the slight accident to my wrist he has been taking down my thoughts, and that is why my letters may seem different.

If only I could be with you, I'd whisper all the things I want you to know, and nobody in the whole world should hear them save us two. Take care of yourself, my loved one, and ask Cres to let me know how you are.

With love to Aunt Lisbeth and Cres,
Your devoted husband,
Robert Darton.

As Captain Farley carefully re-read the lines, his brow furrowed whimsically.

"Suppose that cousin should grow suspicious!" he mused.

Next morning the sun had barely pushed its gold ball above the horizon when the air grew clogged with a blazing fury of shot and shell. The enemy had opened fire. Automatically, each individual in those long lines of trenches galvanised into an instrument of destruction.

Heavier and faster came the bursting shells overhead; the first line of trenches seethed like overcharged volcanoes. The front rank of soldiers retreated to their second line of trenches.

The Lieutenant of Farley's company, with a scalp wound gushing blood, cleared his vision just in time to see his Captain go down, struck in the thigh. Sweeping out one powerful arm, the big Lieutenant caught him up and bore him backward, even as he called a quick command to the men.

II.

When the Captain opened his eyes, he found himself on a narrow cot in a long, bright room; a Red Cross nurse was shaking down the thermometer which had registered his temperature.

"There!" she exclaimed cheerily, "it's working back to normal."

He smiled at her unsteadily, too tired to argue that he was perfectly all right.

"I'll bring you some broth," she said, turning away, but with a faint ejaculation he stopped her.

With a precision almost official she answered his questions. He had been shot in the thigh and been taken to a field hospital near the scene of action. The wound was healing nicely. During the attack in which he had been wounded, several thousand men were supposed to have lost their lives.

After a long conflict the position had been held. His Lieutenant, though slightly wounded, had been able to take command of the company.

With a relieved sigh, Captain Farley closed his eyes. In war it was not a question of the individual, but of the mass. The mass, minus a few thousand men, was still impregnable.

Suddenly, amid the drowsy calm produced by opiates, came a disconcerting note. This note was so infinitesimal that at first it was scarcely distinguishable.

Captain Farley's men had borne themselves valiantly; Captain Farley's family had been notified of his convalescence; what was this vague perplexity that threatened his repose? He racked his brain for some suggestion as to the cause of his unrest, but always it eluded him.

There was something, or was it someone, who needed his remembrance, yet for the life of him he could not recollect more.

Next morning one of the wounded soldiers, in a cot near the Captain's, laid down a letter and exclaimed proudly to a comrade: "My son was born last Monday!"

Instantly Farley's memory jolted into action. In a seaside village near Brighton the wife of his Corporal awaited the glory of women—and some message from her husband to bring her courage.

Of a passing nurse he demanded a pen and note-paper. Then, despite her arguments against his overtaxing his strength, he wrote a brief, tender note to the girl.

Not till some days later did he realise that though he had signed the name of Robert

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"Captain Farley," she said clearly, "those letters . . were written while his wife was dangerously ill, and after her death. I wrote them. . . . I am Corporal Darton's cousin, Cresile."
[Page 371, col. 2.]

Darton, the letter had been no counterfeit, but had welled from the heart of James Farley.

This realisation swept in upon him when announcement came of the birth of Robert Manwell Darton, Junior. The letter which contained the news had been forwarded by his Lieutenant to the hospital where Farley was recuperating.

For a long while he lay quite still, his gaze, slightly blurred, fixed on a single rosebud which a young Belgian nurse had placed on a stand near his cot.

The next letter which he received from Jean was so full of yearning that it broke down his resolution to have her officially informed of her husband's death. Through black hours, when he should have been gaining much-needed sleep, he argued with his conscience.

Now that the young mother was growing stronger, what was the use of further deception? Sooner or later she must meet her tragedy. It would be cruel to keep her longer in ignorance.

Yet he could not bear to think of the time when those brave letters, though written to another man, would not find their way to him. Finally he reached a decision.

Owing to Captain Farley's excellent training as an electrical engineer, the Government had decided, subsequent to his recovery, to place him in charge of one of the big engineering schools, where his services would prove far-reaching. Accordingly, he was

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invalided home to receive the care of his mother and sister.

He had been at Worthing two weeks when he announced that he must go to a seaside village near Brighton. His family protested vigorously against this seeming rashness, for though the gash in his thigh had healed, he walked with a painful limp.

But that determination which had placed young Farley at the head of his profession, counter-balanced the precaution of loved ones. He must go, and he would go alone.

He wrote a note to Mrs. Robert Darton in the name of her husband, informing her that Captain Farley was recuperating at Worthing. To account for the lapse in his letters to Jean, he emphasised the fact that his company had been in frequent and dangerous action, its Captain had been disabled, its Lieutenant slightly wounded.

In closing, he stated that the Captain had requested this letter of introduction so that he might have the pleasure of dropping in some fine day to call on Mrs. Darton.

It was late afternoon when Captain Farley alighted at the small, immaculate station, typical of English seaside towns, and asked of a respectful agent the way to the home of Robert Darton.

The old man, full of admiration for the soldierly figure with its limp of honour, pointed out careful directions.

The house was the farthest one on the winding sea road; it had a red roof. Would the Captain care to drive? No. But the house was some distance. Even so, the Captain preferred to walk.

The old man could not guess that the Captain had a fierce encounter waging within his soul and a very short time in which to contend for victory.

To the soldier, whose nature during the past few months had undergone many changes through the sight and experience of suffering, this village, with its quaint cottages and wide rose gardens, exhaled a rare charm. It soothed the turmoil of his senses. By the time he had reached the farthest house on the winding sea road, he had gained that peace which nature in its magnificent simplicity conveys to the subconscious mind.

Even in that perplexing moment when the young officer was trying to fortify sympathy for the wife of Corporal Darton with the bulwarks of reason, his conscious mind paid acute attention to detail. With grim curiosity he inspected the garden surrounding the low-roofed house, noting how accurate had been his imagined setting.

There were the hedgerows. A stray leaf here and there rustled down from tall lime-trees. As he approached the ivy-covered walls he beheld a latticed window, and halting in the shadow of shrubbery, he peered within.

There, in the last sunrays, sat a woman; close to her bosom she held a small, white bundle. Her gaze was fixed on the open hearth where a fire burnt.

As best he could in that uncertain light, Captain Farley studied her face. In profile, it appeared to be strong, yet sensitive, with finely modelled features.

The sight reassured him. He turned down the path to the front door and clanged the brass knocker.

The summons was answered by a neat maid, who received his name, and ushered him into a dim hall. She returned to invite him into the sitting-room which he had viewed through the window. At present it was deserted, but the maid informed him that her mistress would see him in a few moments.

The Captain seated himself in a deep chair, and proceeded to marshal his scattered thoughts.

Should he tell this young wife the whole truth? Should he delude her into a belief that her husband had been killed in a very recent engagement? In the one case, would hurt pride blunt the blow? In the other, might she not some day learn of the deception and suffer doubly? While he cogitated, she entered.

The wife of Robert Darton was taller than Captain Farley had thought she would be. Her figure was symmetrical, well-rounded, with lithe movements suggestive of athletic training.

She held out her hand cordially, and spoke in low, controlled tones.

"It was most kind of you to come. I regret you were wounded. It is somewhat late to offer tea, but would you prefer that to—well, other refreshments?"

"Tea would be delightful," murmured the Captain, "that is, if it's no bother."

"None at all." She touched the bell, and almost instantly the maid appeared.

"Tea, Eunice," prompted her mistress.

His hostess, with a brilliant smile, turned once more to her guest.

"I have so many questions to ask that answering them all would leave you quite breathless. Perhaps you had better tell me the things you choose."

The officer had hoped for some enlightenment through her opening remarks, and here she was calmly transferring the opening remarks to him.

He cleared his throat. "I have the great honour of telling that your—that Corporal Darton has proved himself a brave soldier, a worthy representative of his country."

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Her blue eyes brightened. "That is what I—we expected of him."

The Captain sat silent a moment. Not so much the words she had said, but the way she had said them convinced him that she would prefer the truth.

The love of such a mate, James Farley believed, would ennoble any man to the heights of glorious living or valiant dying. Also he realised such love could be given but once in a woman's life.

Suddenly he recalled a remark which he had heard a noted English general make to a company of soldiers: "Men, if you must fight, make it a cause, not gluttony. When you use bayonet or sabre, cut clean."

James Farley found himself forced to strike a blow, but at least he could "cut clean." In a terse speech he told her the exact date and manner of Darton's death; he acknowledged that since that day he had written every letter which she supposed had come from her husband.

Not till this moment, when his mission was fairly accomplished, did the man feel the strain of his journey and the unaccustomed exercise. Suddenly, to his taut senses, the fading sunlight in that quiet room blackened; the chair in which he sat seemed sinking fathoms deep, but by a stupendous effort he held himself erect.

The woman was speaking.

"Captain Farley," she said clearly, "those letters which you read during the past month were sent to keep up the courage of a brave man in the trenches. They were written while his wife was dangerously ill, and after her death. I wrote them. My mother and I decided that at such a time deception was pardonable. I am Corporal Darton's cousin, Creslie."

The room vibrated with silence, then a gentle wail sounded from a distant cradle. Farley caught the tones of a voice, softly soothing:

"Hush," it said, "boy babies do not cry. Lad, you're the son of a soldier!"

MY LITTLE HOUSE OF DREAMS.

It stands with windows twinkling bright,
And looks towards the sea,
And o'er thatched roof and walls of white
The roses climb with glee;
While from a cloudless sky above,
In summer, sunlight streams
Upon the little house I love,
And call, "My house of dreams."

In winter time no wind or rain
Beats on the roof or wall;
But snowflakes patter on the pane,
And, as they gently fall,
Will weave a soft and fleecy rug
On which the moonlight gleams,
And cover up, all safe and snug,
My little house of dreams.

Oh! house which I have never seen
With outward eyes, I own,
Of which love has the builder been
And architect alone,
No other dwelling, great or small,
To me so charming seems,
Or half as dear as that I call,
"My little house of dreams!"

Ada Leonora Harris.

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For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

WELL SUPPLIED.

Not many months ago a certain regiment was stationed at Canterbury in billets, but the "hard cases" were put into empty houses, and before long these empty houses were in need of repairs.

One day the Orderly Officer, in going his rounds, found one of the windows broken in a room occupied by "hard cases." This was reported, but nothing was done in the matter. The officer again visited the house a few days later and found the window still out. After examining and passing the room, he went on to say that a few "kind friends" were going to supply the men with some games for their spare time.

Upon hearing this one of the men stood to attention, saluted, and said:

"Thank you in anticipation for the games, sir, but for goodness' sake don't bring us any draughts, as we get quite enough now."

ALL AT SEA.

A burly Jack Tar was escorting his best girl across the tram-lines when a car came bowling round the corner and nearly ran into them.

"Hi, there, you blind land lubber!" yelled Jack to the conductor. "Can't you see where you are going?"

"Who are you talking to?" cried the conductor. "I ain't driving, am I?"

"No!" roared the sailor. "But you're jolly well steering, ain't yer?"

OFFICER: "Why the deuce don't you salute? Can't you see I'm an officer?"
ROOKY: "H-orficer, are ye? Well, yer bloomin' lucky. I'm only a bally private!"

LOOSE AND LONG.

FRENCH LADY VISITOR: "And do you know, *mon ami*, you remind me so much of *ma belle France!*"

CONVALESCENT SAILOR: "'Ow, miss?"

FRENCH LADY VISITOR: "Well, er—your trousers—Toulouse and Toulons!"

THE BITER BITTEN.

A certain Marine, on receiving his washing each week, noticed that his washerwoman never took the trouble to sew a missing button on his shirt; so by way of a gentle hint he tacked the lid of a blacking-tin on the spot where the button should be.

Imagine his feelings when he received his washing the following week and discovered that the washerwoman had made a buttonhole to fit the blacking-tin!

COURTING DISASTER.

Some recruits once thought they would rag their Sergeant-Instructor, so on his command "Number," the following took place:

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King."

The Sergeant, as is the wont of most sergeants, had a quick retort. Without any apparent hesitation he roared:

"Court cards fall out and report to the Orderly Room at once."

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"A quart, please!"—Mr. Bert Thomas depicts the shivering householder who has to take in the milk on a snowy morning.

WANTED— A GOOD GENERAL!

By Lesbia Robinson.

The Horrors of Compulsory Housework illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

Since the beginning of the war most people have learnt to do without something they once thought essential to their well-being; some do without new-laid eggs, others do without servants. It is bad enough to do without a servant from motives of economy; it is far worse to do without when one is willing to barter the half of one's kingdom for a proprietary interest in a starched cap and apron, and it availeth not at all.

It may be said that the work of scouring saucepans and blacking grates should be sweetened to the patriotic housewife by the thought that Louisa is engaged in making shells for the demolition of Germans, or hoeing potatoes destined as food for those who even in war-time have conscientious objections to going hungry away. This is all very well in the abstract, but is little solace to the harassed wife who has to engage in daily warfare with brooms, dish-cloths, and other forbidding things with which she has no desire to be on terms of personal intimacy.

As for the servants who still remain faithful to the profession, they, like other rare and costly things, must be treated with respect and indulgence.

Every other evening out and free entertainment for all their soldier friends are taken as a matter of course, and in the near future such attractions as "Fire in bedroom," "Gramophone provided for the kitchen," or "Weekly visit to the theatre arranged," will have to be offered if the race is not to become extinct.

Even when Mary Jane deserts her post it is possible to "carry on" with a fair degree

Mr. Reg. F. Smith is convinced that the kitchen range is the abode of a spiteful little imp bent on frustrating a mere man's efforts to clean the grate.

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"The New Recruit"—the trials of the young husband who volunteers to help in the housework, portrayed by Mr. Cottington Taylor.

of comfort if a good charwoman and a little method are employed. If everybody had their allotted tasks and kept to them, home might still be the abode of peace, but this is seldom the case. The preparation of a meal is the signal for a bustle that turns the house into a good imitation of Liverpool Street Station at six p.m. The larder, the china-closet, and kitchen are all raided by different members of the family in succession, with the result that fifteen cups are companioned by six saucers, and three jugs of milk help to atone for the entire absence of sugar.

Some housewives solace themselves in their servantless state with the thought that at least they can call the kitchen their own, and potter about without fear of resentful looks. But the sense of relief is a purely fictitious one, and speedily dies before "the daily round, the common task," which usually furnish a great deal more than the average housewife has the least desire to ask.

The worst sufferers, and deservedly so, from being left minus a handmaiden, are those people who from their youth up have pinned their faith as far as meat and drink are concerned on the offices of a devoted maid. Such were the Idles, an artistic, incompetent family of orphans, who took no thought for the morrow, but expected bacon for breakfast nevertheless. They got it, too, until Abigail, the ubiquitous, departed in high dudgeon at being refused her daily new-laid egg for breakfast, eggs having soared triumphantly to 4½d. apiece.

Things were bad with the Idle family, who subsisted on an uncertain income derived from creating such superfluities as artistic metal work, fashion sketches, and third-rate poetry. It was decided that Aurelia, the eldest girl, who was a prolific writer of unsaleable verse, should take over the housework, as her spasmodic contributions to the family exchequer would hardly be missed.

To this Aurelia agreed, chiefly because she had that morning seen a duck of a green linen overall embroidered with marigolds,

"Home Service"—Mr. Alfred Leete gives us the masterful wife who expects her hen-pecked husband to do all the rough work.

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"The Great Unwashed"—the nightmare of eternally washing up, illustrated by Esmond.

which domestic duties would give her a legitimate excuse for buying. But her love of the artistic was her undoing, since she insisted on carrying out her favourite colour schemes in the cooking, regardless of flavour or suitability. So she grated lemon on the cabbage that its yellow might make a pleasing contrast, and garnished the Sunday blancmange with slices of ruddy beetroot.

For a time the family suffered in silence, lest rebellion should increase their sufferings.

"Keep the Home Fires Burning"—a pathetic study of a devoted husband, by Mr. Thomas Henry.

The climax came when Aurelia was discovered writing an ode to a batter pudding while the said batter pudding was fast joining the company of cinders in the oven. Thereat her sisters and brother held solemn conclave, and with one voice called upon Aurelia to resign, and resume her former occupation, her average earnings of 5s. 3d. a week being with common consent dedicated to the purchase of

Mr. Starr Wood suggests that ineligible men might don cap and apron, and replace departed handmaidens.

new-laid eggs for Abigail, provided she could be persuaded to return.

"Eggs can't possibly go up to more than ninepence each," asserted Esther, the only one of the family with the least shred of common sense, "so that 5s. 3d. will provide for all contingencies."

So it was arranged, and Abigail being prevailed upon to resume her duties and supply meals which, if lacking in the appeal to the æsthetic bestowed on them by Aurelia, lacked nothing in their appeal to the palate, peace descended once more on the house of Idle, and Aurelia resumed her occupation of harrying editors and filling waste-paper baskets.

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Treachery in the Camp

By VIOLET METHLEY

"Life every man holds dear; but the brave man
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life."

"Then all the rest of us are unanimous about accepting the terms?" Colonel Leverton said. "You, Wetherman—yes?—and Poole and Broome. You agree, too, Major?"

"Ye-es——" Major McCartney rubbed his chin doubtfully. "Although a pack of native princesses will be the devil's own nuisance."

"We have only to take them under escort to Relinda; and, after all, the poor creatures have their value as hostages. Dagh Mohammed does not attempt to make any other conditions, and I must say I consider it most reasonable. They'll have to ride like the deuce to get away before Hopetoun comes to relieve us, and—they don't know how near we are to surrender."

The speaker glanced grimly towards the gap which Prince Dagh Mohammed's cannon had battered in the very wall of the room where they sat. "Well, I take it that we accept. I shall not ask you to repeat your—er—rather discreditable opinion, Savile."

The young man addressed flushed, but spoke doggedly.

"I still consider, sir, that we should think twice before taking charge of these women. Dagh Mohammed may mean treachery."

"Upon my word!" The Colonel exploded fiercely. "What are you young fellows coming to? There's none of the old—er—chivalry, the fine feeling, the—er—spirit which made Englishmen what they are——" The speaker became conscious of incongruity, and finished vehemently: "Degenerate—that's what you are! Degenerate! You'd actually refuse to take charge of these unlucky women, kick them when they're down——"

"Not exactly that, sir!" Savile protested.

"Exactly that, sir! Fortunately, you're in a minority."

Savile reddened until redness could go no further. He examined the tips of his boots with unnecessary minuteness, and made no further protest, but his lips were set in a very definite line.

Five minutes later Prince Dagh Mohammed's messenger was on his way back to the garish Europeanised Palace, half-a-mile away. Savile watched his departure from an angle of the battered ramparts. It was very hot and silent, except for the disquieting, reverberant roaring of the Prince's tigers. It seemed hardly possible to realise that the enemy's guns were still, that the six weeks' siege was over. Along that sandy road Hopetoun and his men would come to find the rebels gone, and with them Dagh Mohammed and his brothers, the hereditary rulers of Jarnapore. That was unavoidable, since opposition was utterly out of the question; but the English flag would still be flying above the Residency and the town.

Yet Savile felt inexplicably troubled and uneasy. His expression only changed at the sound of footsteps behind him.

"Gwen," he said softly, "I know that's you."

"Yes, it is."

At the cold hardness of the tone Savile swung round. A tall girl stood there, with hair that looked all the more vividly gold for her pallor and the darkness of her eyes. She went on vehemently:

"I came to tell you how much I despise you!"

"But, Gwen, my dearest——!"

"Don't call me that! I've heard all about it from father. I don't think I would have believed it from anyone else. I couldn't have dreamt that you would behave like this, when these poor creatures need help and protection so much, when they are so absolutely in our power."

"I don't trust Dagh Mohammed," said Savile doggedly.

"And so you'd revenge yourself on helpless women——?"

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"Don't be ridiculous, Gwen," said Savile sternly and most unwisely. But he was uneasy and unhappy; moreover, like those of all the garrison, his nerves were fretted almost to breaking-point by the strain of the past weeks.

"Oh!" For a moment Gwen paused breathlessly. "Oh, if you're going to speak to me like that——!"

"I'm sorry, dear, but—well, you're rather hard on me, you know—making me out such a brute."

"I didn't—and nothing could be too bad if I did!" the girl protested illogically, her cheeks burning, her eyes full of tears. "Unless—unless you're sorry now for having said what you did to father."

"I'm not." Savile replied so decidedly that Gwen winced as though at a blow. She answered with rather melodramatic vehemence:

"Then you need never speak to me again! There's nothing between us any more."

"But—Gwen——!"

Without heeding Savile's protest, the girl walked away to where her father stood with McCartney, watching the open gates of the Palace.

Those of the garrison who were unwounded or convalescent had assembled by now in little groups and clusters. The few soldiers were posted, with their empty muskets upon their shoulders, along the outer line of ramparts to make as brave a show as might be, and to hide the utter weakness of the defenders.

Savile found himself alone, tacitly sent to Coventry, as it were, and he tried, very unsuccessfully, to find humour in the situation.

A trumpet-call rang out from the Palace; almost immediately a troop of horsemen issued from the gateway and galloped away along the white-powdered road. The sun glittered on the jewelled turbans of the three who rode in advance; behind them came the troopers in half-European uniforms of scarlet and white, with points of light glinting from their lance-tips.

The thud of their hoof-falls came up plainly to the watchers at the Residency, growing fainter and yet fainter until the riders vanished in a cloud of dust.

They had scarcely disappeared before a second procession emerged from the great whitewashed gate, and turned into the road which led up to the Residency.

"Reminds one of a circus," McCartney commented.

"Or something out of the 'Arabian Nights,'" added Wetherman.

Both comparisons were apt enough. A dozen dark-skinned, white-coated men came first, carrying brass salvers, their piled contents covered with shawls. A swaying, unwieldy vehicle followed, gilt and painted like a circus caravan. This travelling abode of the Prince's women-folk was drawn by a team of dove-coloured, wide-horned oxen, whose driver sat sideways upon the shafts, a huge whip in his hand.

Through the open gateway, into the outer courtyard, the heavy cart rolled, and the Colonel stepped forward to meet it. The driver slipped down from his perch and spoke a few soft sentences, bowing low, and spreading out his hands as though in deprecation of his own words.

The Colonel glanced with raised eyebrows at the group of European men and women about him.

"He says that the women are frightened to death, poor creatures," he said. "They think that they are going to be killed or tortured, it seems. We must try to reassure them—eh? Ah, I know!" He turned to his gentle, pale-faced wife. "You and Gwen come with us to receive them. And how about you, Mrs. McCartney?"

"Of course I'll come, and Mrs. Wetherman, too, I'm sure!" the dark-eyed little Irishwoman answered vivaciously. "Just fancy if it were our husbands who'd ridden away like that! Let's all welcome the poor souls—and won't you men leave your swords outside, Colonel? They're rather awe-inspiring, and I'm sure they'll look upon them as a sign of ill-feeling."

Laughing at the little woman's earnestness, the Colonel unbuckled his sword and laid it aside. His example was followed by the other men, and the procession moved on towards the inner courtyard, that almost impregnable courtyard, where the English had planned to make their last stand, if the worst came.

The heavy, iron-barred gate stood open; through it rolled the lurching, springless caravan. Savile, who lingered in the doorway, could hear muffled rustlings and murmurs from within. Uneasiness still possessed the young man; he felt unwanted, and yet strangely averse to leaving the place.

One by one the natives placed their burdens upon the ground, salaamed, and withdrew. The Colonel sat on the parapet of the dry well in the middle of the courtyard watching them, whilst Poole and Broome peeped tentatively under the covering shawls. Gwen leant on her father's shoulder, smiling faintly at the young fellows' comments on the contents of the trays. Her white cheeks were still flushed, and she bit

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her lips frowningly when, now and then, she glanced towards Savile standing apart in the doorway.

"There's a most gorgeous necklace under here, Miss Leverton," Poole declared. "It may be emeralds, but it looks more like bottle-glass. Hullo! They're not going to present us with the cows, then!"

For the last of the attendants had unyoked the soft-eyed oxen and led them away, leaving the gilded waggon with shafts forlornly drooping.

Once more the driver spoke, bowing low.

"He says that their Highnesses will come forth when he and all the other low-born slaves have departed," the Colonel interpreted. "Very well, then, my good man, depart by all means."

The driver approached the door at the back of the caravan and opened it a few inches, speaking quickly and unintelligibly to those within. Then he turned and made towards the entrance to the courtyard at a run. His face was towards Savile, and the expression upon it seemed suddenly to make the young man's fears take on a concrete form.

He stepped forward and caught the native by the wrist as he passed. The man struggled fiercely, glancing backwards over his shoulder with a look of abject fear in his eyes.

"Are you mad, Savile? Let the fellow go!" the Colonel called with angry irritation. "Can't you see that he has orders not—— What's that?"

Almost drowning the amazed exclamation came another sound, splitting the hot air. Savile swung round, still gripping the thin, wiry wrist, and a horrified shout broke from his lips. "Look! Good Heavens! *Look!*"

Through the slowly opening door of the cart a great paw had been thrust. Even as the words escaped Savile, a huge, lank tiger sprang out and crouched in the sand, his tail slowly moving. Another grating roar and a second brute leapt out, cat-like and graceful, followed closely by another.

But Savile had been forced into decisive action before this. He scarcely heard the startled exclamations of the men, Mrs. McCartney's frightened shriek. In his frantic struggles to escape, the native had dragged his captor close to the gateway; it was still partly open, and the Englishman caught a glimpse of dark faces and white, gleaming eyeballs. He could have escaped himself easily enough, he was being literally forced to escape, but such a course never struck him as conceivable. He loosened his grip on the native's wrist, and the fellow stumbled through the door. It closed heavily, with the thud of great bolts driven home.

Almost losing his balance, Savile staggered against it, but in his hand as he turned was the huge hide whip which he had wrenched from the driver's grip.

Before him was the little white-walled courtyard, half in shadow, half in brilliant sunlight. The Colonel and his companions had retreated into the furthest angle, the men forming a half-circle in front of the women. Between them and the gateway, three huge tigers crouched on their bellies, with tail-tips slowly stirring.

Savile glanced round swiftly, desperately. On two sides of the court were sheer walls, the third was broken only by the closed door. On the fourth side, two rooms opened, sheltered by a wide verandah, but their doorways were only curtained in tropical fashion; they offered no refuge. There was only one place of possible safety.

Savile walked forward deliberately, the heavy whip gripped in his hand, his eyes fixed upon the crouching beasts. They had scarcely yet recovered from their jolting journey, but there was not a second to waste. Their lankness showed them to be half starved; there was a dull, fierce light in their yellow eyes.

As Savile moved slowly forward, he spoke evenly, without raising his voice.

"You hear me, Colonel? Don't answer. You must get into the cart, all of you; it's the only possible place. Move softly, make as little noise as possible, so as not to rouse them. But in any case I believe I can keep them back for a minute or two."

The young man stopped short between the tigers and the huddled group of men and women. The eyes of the great brutes followed his movements; otherwise they had scarcely stirred. But, as Savile had half expected, the first sound from those behind him precipitated matters. Snarling hoarsely, one of the tigers began to creep forward, and Savile clenched his teeth, slowly raising the whip.

He saw the muscles in the huge striped body become tense; he was ready for the spring when it came, and struck with all his force. The lash caught the tiger across the muzzle and it shrank back, growling fiercely, but for the moment half frightened.

An instant's respite; then another of the tigers sprang, this time directly at Savile. He swerved to one side just in time, whirling the whip round his head. He got his blow home, and the beast crouched snarling, but the claws of one great paw had torn his sleeve.

A kind of madness seized the young man. Instead of waiting to be attacked, he took the

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offensive. He slashed here and there at the huge striped bodies as though they had been so many unruly dogs; he swore at them between his teeth, conscious only for the instant of a kind of fierce exultation. For he knew that he had momentary power over these wild, untamed brutes, his will held them in check, as much as the whip in his hand. They cowered back with thunderous growls, but they did not dare to pass him. In that short moment Savile tasted the wild, fierce fascination of beast-taming.

He knew nothing of what was passing behind him until the Colonel spoke softly.

"They're all in except me, Savile—come yourself now, man, for Heaven's sake!"

"Get in, sir!" Savile muttered hoarsely. "I can't look round, but I'll try to fall back. Get in yourself, sir!"

"Yes, it's best, Colonel," came McCartney's whisper. "He's got them in hand, and we can do no good. It will only infuriate them to see you. Come in, sir!"

An instant's pause, then the Colonel's tense voice again.

"We're all in, Savile. I'm holding the door open for you."

Inch by inch Savile fell back. He wielded the whip almost mechanically now, like an automatic figure, conscious scarcely at all of weariness, not at all of fear.

He knew himself to be close to the cart now; he could hear the heavy strained breathing of those within. He spoke again, his eyes fixed unswervingly on those crouching, cowering forms.

"How does the door open?"

"Outwards, and—good heavens—there's no means of fastening it from inside. It's only bolted from without. Never mind, we must barricade it somehow."

But Savile saw, and made up his mind.

"Keep back," he ordered the men behind him sharply. "Shut the door closely; you'll only make them attack if they catch a glimpse of you. When you feel me pressing against it you can let me in."

He heard the door creak slightly, gave back inch by inch, until he stood close to it. Then, with one hand, he felt cautiously behind him, groping over the panels.

At the level of his hip he found a bolt and drove it home. And still he dared not turn, even for a second. Very slowly he raised his left hand above his head. For there must surely be a second bolt; if only it was not out of his reach.

He found it, after an instant of ghastly suspense, but it stuck, and refused to move, then suddenly gave way, and ran screeching into its socket. Savile let his arm fall slowly, with a sigh of relief, as a voice spoke close to his ear.

"Good heavens, man—what have you done?"

"Bolted the door," the young man answered doggedly. "It was the only way; they'd have broken it down otherwise, in an instant."

"But . . . you must come in! Savile, do you hear me? I order you!"

"I can't help that, sir." Savile set his teeth doggedly. "I am not going to obey."

"I'll break down the door."

"You'd find it difficult, I hope. Don't make a row, sir; you'll only make things a thousand times worse for all of us. Ah—they're coming! *Be quiet!*"

Silence within the cart followed Savile's peremptory order. But without the great beasts were summoning their courage, beginning dimly to realise in their brute brains that this man, after all, was but a weak thing compared to them.

Savile saw the knowledge growing in their flickering yellow eyes, but he still faced them fearlessly, whip in hand. He saw no faintest hope of saving his life, but at least he could fight for it to the end.

He had changed his position slightly; with his hand he felt the rim of one of the great wooden wheels. At the touch a chance—a barely possible chance—presented itself. If he could climb upon the flat top of the caravan . involuntarily at the thought he glanced round, measuring the distance with his eye, and at the same instant the tiger nearest to him sprang.

Savile swerved aside just in time, thrusting the whip into his belt. In a second he had leapt upon the wheel, and sprang upwards, snatching at that faint chance.

His fingers crooked over the roof-rim of the cart; he hung for an instant, every muscle and sinew taut and strained.

To draw himself up thus was difficult, scarcely possible, but for that urgency of death snarling at his heels. But, with a mighty effort, it was done, and just in time. As he lay panting and exhausted on the roof of the cart, there came a crashing impact against its side, shaking the whole fabric, then another.

He struggled to his knees, scarcely able to retain his footing. He had had no time to reckon on the baffled fury of the tigers at seeing their prey escape. Again and again they sprang upwards, tearing at the sides of the cart, scoring long grooves with their claws in the gilt and painted wood.

A wide-jawed head appeared within reach of Savile's arm; he slashed at it with his whip, and the brute fell back with a snarl of fury.

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Then another dragged itself partly up on to the cart-top, to be beaten back just in time.

Very plainly Savile realised that this contest could not last. His strength would not hold out much longer, and over and above this consideration was the danger to those within the cart. At every fresh onslaught, the fabric creaked and groaned; at any moment one of the flimsy panels might yield.

Suddenly Savile realised that he must hold on to his senses. He looked round again and caught his breath at a glimpse of a remote possibility.

He was on a level now with the sloping roof of the verandah; if he could reach that, he could climb on to the roof, attain safety, and a chance of help for the others. But a gulf of perhaps sixteen feet lay between.

It was rather characteristic of Savile that, having seen the chance, he did not allow himself a second for deliberation. He had never attempted such a leap before, it was more than doubtful if he could do it now; but the penalty of failure was certain death for himself and others.

He dragged off his tunic and boots, and hurled them down at the startled tigers; he tightened his belt as he walked to the furthest limit of the roof, to give himself all the run possible.

Savile poised himself for an instant and took the run; his arms swung above his head as he launched himself outwards, forwards—then his feet struck a hard surface—he felt himself sliding down.

His legs shot over the edge of the verandah, he caught at it just in time to save himself. As he hung, he heard the soft thudding patter of feet below him. There was a vibrating roar, and something struck his ankle. He was scarcely conscious of pain, but he felt himself being dragged downwards. Savile drew up his leg and kicked out mightily; he struck something soft and yielding, nearly over-balanced, recovered himself again. Then, with one more effort, he hauled himself up on to the sloping verandah roof.

* * * *

Again and again they sprang upwards, tearing at the sides of the cart, scoring long grooves with their claws in the gilt and painted wood.

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At the outer guard the sentries prepared to receive the column of troops advancing in a mighty cloud of dust, and now very near to the Residency gates. The men were beginning to wonder uneasily why the Colonel had not yet appeared to welcome the relieving force, although the women's native escort had departed, and somewhat precipitately, long since.

And then, staggering towards the outer gateway, came a strange, almost unrecognisable figure. Savile's hair hung lankly over his sweat-soaked face; his shirt was half torn from his body, his way marked by a trail of blood-drops. He caught at the arm of one of the startled men.

"Here—confound you! Don't let me fall—yet——" he gasped. "I've—got to keep my senses—until I've shown them—until they've brought their guns—and—killed——"

* * * * *

The released prisoners stumbled out from the foul darkness of the cart into the blatant sunshine, where three huge striped bodies lay in the crimsoned dust. But Gwen scarcely saw them; she had fallen on her knees beside a huddled form, seemingly almost as limp and lifeless.

Savile's senses returned at the sound of her voice, maybe at the touch of her lips upon his forehead.

"Don't bother, dear," he said weakly. "It's—nothing—only a rather big cat-scratch."

A wide-jawed head appeared within reach of Savile's arm; he slashed at it with his whip, and the brute fell back with a snarl of fury. Then another dragged itself partly up . . . to be beaten back just in time. [Page 379, col. 1]

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CAP & BELLS

MOKE OR MAN.

Great had been the excitement in the village. Two old people, both enjoying their Old Age Pensions, had got married.

A few days later the Vicar met the elderly bride in the village street. Just behind her walked her aged husband, laboriously pushing a laden barrow.

"Good morning, Mrs. Brown!" said the Vicar cheerily. "And how do you like married life? I suppose you'll be giving up washing now?"

"No, I beeant, sir," replied the lady decidedly. "You see, things do be so mighty bad, and food so dear these times, that I must do summat to make ends meet."

"But, surely your husband——" began the astonished clergyman.

"Oh, 'e!" replied the bride, jerking her thumb backward toward the old man, who was pausing a moment to wipe his brow. "If I 'adn't taken 'e, I'd 'ave 'ad to get a donkey!"

NOT WORTH PAYING FOR.

Andy McTavish was "no feelin' juist weel," so he went to the doctor and stated his complaints.

"What do you drink?" demanded the medico.

"Whusky."

"How much?"

"Maybe a bottle a day."

"Do you smoke?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Two ounces a day."

"Well, you give up whisky and tobacco altogether."

Andy took up his cap and in three steps reached the door.

"Andy," called the doctor, "you have not paid for my advice!"

"I'm no takkin' it," snapped Andy, as he shut the door behind him.

PROVOCATION.

A trim, top-hatted citizen;
Finances solvent; morals good;
Why should a dozen decent men
Thirst for his honourable blood?

He travels by the half-past eight;
His voice is very clear and loud;
What should have been a *tête- -tête*
Becomes the secret of a crowd.

And so we cannot choose but hear
Just why the lobster disagreed;
And how the roses grow this year;
And what he thinks of Winston's screed;

And how the war may yet be won;
And things to Mr. G.'s discredit;
What Tommy did with Uncle's gun,
What Uncle said, and how he said it.

A noble organ for Hyde Park,
Or any liner's bridge at sea;
Yet I foresee, now nights are dark,
Another Tunnel Tragedy.

R. B.

AMATEUR SPORTSMAN (sadly): "I see you have 'Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted' all over the place. Why are you so afraid of having a few rabbits shot?"
FARMER: "It ain't the rabbits I'm skeered about—it's the cows!"

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COMING TO THE POINT.

"I know what's passing in your mind," suddenly said the maiden as the habitually silent caller stared at her. "I know, too, why you are calling here night after night, appropriating my time to yourself and keeping other nice young men away. You want me to marry you, don't you?"

"I—I do!" gasped the young man.

"I thought so. Very well, I will."

WON BY A HEAD.

The Mudtown Amateur Dramatic Society were holding their field night. Jack Jordan had been allotted a part with exactly one sentence. He was to be the headsman, and, arrayed in all the glory of black tights and mask, he strode on to the stage.

"My lord, my lord, I have beheaded the maid!" he cried.

"Oh, you 'ave, 'ave you?" said Muggins, the greengrocer, whose part was that of the cruel king. "Well, then, allow me to tell you that you've spoilt the blessed show. You've done it two acts too soon!"

THE HARMONIOUS PORTER.

It was the busiest part of the day at the railway-station, and Michael Flynn, the newest porter, rushed up to the incoming train.

"Change here!" he cried. "Chanjeer for Limrickgalway-anmayo!"

But the lynx-eyed stationmaster was at hand, and he descended upon Micky.

"Haven't I told you before," he cried, "to sing out the names of stations clearly and distinctly? Bear it in mind. Sing 'em out! Do you hear?"

"I will, sir," replied the broth of a bhoy.

But when the next train came in, the passengers were considerably astonished to hear Micky sing:

"Sweet Dreamland faces,
Passing to and fro,
Change here for Limerick,
Galway, and Mayo."

EMBARRASSING FOR DADDY.

A clergyman's small daughter, going to church for the first time, sat very still until her father came in, then she sprang up with a gleeful laugh and shouted:

"Oh, there's Daddy in his nighty!"

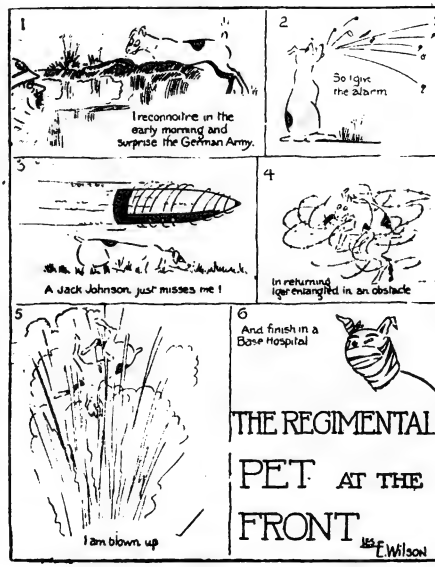
THE SERENADE.

Once I knew a delightful maid,
Whom I worshipped for months afar,
Until one night when, my suit to aid,
I rashly ventured to serenade
That maid on the light guitar.

Alas, for the plans I'd laid!
For the very irate papa
Of that most delightful and charming maid
Cut short my elegant serenade
Before I had strummed a bar.

Of water, a small cascade
Drenched me and my light guitar.
Said a voice: "Be off!" I at once obeyed;
And all I gained by my serenade,
I found, was a slight catarrh.

Ada Leonora Harris.



ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE.

Mr. Alexander Horner was married to a wife—who kept him. Mr. Horner was convinced that there should be only one bread-winner in the family, so he had no qualms of conscience over the fact that his wife slaved in the double part of charwoman and washerwoman.

One evening Mrs. Horner returned home after a more than ordinarily hard day, and found her lord and protector in his usual easy-chair before the fire, at which he was staring blankly.

"What are you doing there, you great lout?" asked the exasperated wife.

"Just sittin' and thinkin'," came the stolid reply.

This was too much for the tired woman.

"Thinking!" she snorted. "What with?"

EASILY REMEDIED.

There had been a woeful accident. The British tar, home on leave, had knocked into an Italian vendor of clay images, and scattered his stock all over the road.

"Ah! Me poor leetle Saint Peter!" moaned the distressed foreigner, "'e 'is eye 'as lost."

But the resourceful Jack was up to the occasion.

"Sorry, mate," said he. "Knock off 'is arm an' call 'im Nelson."

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A BLUNDER IN BRIDES.

How an Avaricious Suitor Met His Just Reward.

1. "My eye!" quoth Sir Guy as he did gaze upon ye fayre Ladye Jane, "I must wed her, for she is both rich and comelie."

HER LUCKY DAY.

Mrs. Mufftup was a good old sort, a comfortable soul. And as she sat in her cosy drawing-room, preparing for forty winks after her substantial lunch, the sight of a miserable, shabby-looking individual gazing furtively up and down the road arrested her attention.

"Poor wretch!" she said, and, in the goodness of her heart, extracted a ten-shil ing note from her purse, wrapped it in a piece of paper on which she had written "Never say die," and sent her maid to hand it to the seedy individual.

"What did he say, Ann?" she inquired on the girl's return.

"He only said 'Right-ho!' ma'am."

"Strange!" muttered the lady, as she sought oblivion.

That same night the seedy-looking one rang the bell.

"'Ere y'are, missus," he said, pressing £5 10s. on the astonished old dame. "'Never Say Die' won at 10 to 1, and you were the only one as backed it. 'Appy to oblige any time, lady!"

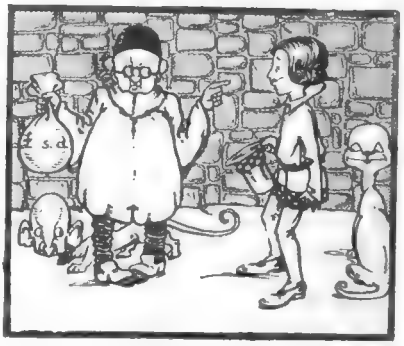
A MATTER OF TASTE.

Jones leisurely took his ticket at the office of a suburban railway-station, but, on hearing the train approaching, made more haste than speed to the platform. When nearly at the top of the steps leading to the platform, his foot slipped, his silk hat wobbled on to his brow, and his umbrella and bag betook themselves one to the right and one to the left, but he manfully regained these possessions by holding them down on the steps in a grasp-all sort of fashion.

Whilst thus on all fours, Jones meekly looked up at the official at the gate, inquiring:

"Is this the way to get to the Victoria train?"

"Yes, sir," was the unsympathetic reply, "you may come that way if you wish." And Jones felt still more lowly-minded.



2. So he did hie him to a wise old gent, who for much goode cashe did give Sir Guy a spelle to make ye fayre Jane wed him.

TOO LATE!

A strict old country-woman had engaged a new maidservant, who was not used to the ways of a farm.

On the first morning the mistress rose with the dawn and proceeded to the attic, where she hammered on the maid's door. But the maid lingered a little longer between the sheets, and then reluctantly began to dress, so that it was nearly six o'clock before she descended to the kitchen.

"Fine morning, ma'am," she said cheerily to her mistress.

The latter looked up sourly from the tea she was drinking.

"It was," she replied significantly.

DIDN'T CONCERN HIM.

Johnny had a friend called Jim Smith, whose mother made the most glorious apple dumplings on Thursdays. It generally happened that Johnny called round at the Smiths' on those days and did himself well in the matter of dumplings—in fact, he was quite brazen about it, and generally stated quite openly what he had come for.

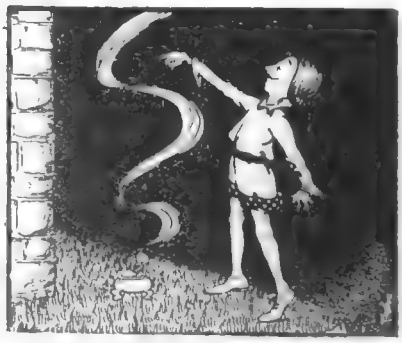
It so happened that his mother got to hear of this weekly outbreak, and lectured Johnny on the wickedness of cadging.

"Anybody would think," she said, "that you did not get enough to eat at home! It's disgusting of you, John, to go round begging for food, so don't let me ever hear of you doing such a thing again!"

But on the following Thursday Johnny turned up with the customary coating of pastry-crumbs all over his clothes.

"You wicked little boy, you!" said his mother. "I told you you were not to go cadging at the Smiths'—and you've been doing it again! I'm ashamed of you!"

"I didn't cadge!" answered Johnny stoutly. "I simply went round to see Jim, and as I walked into the house I said: 'This place smells as if it were full of apple dumplings, but what's that to me?'"



3. That night did Sir Guy try ye spelle beneath ye Ladye Jane's castle, crying: "Jane, I do command ye to come LOAN to me."

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"RISING" TO THE OCCASION.

Two sailors were arranging the meals for their mates.

"'Ere, Bill," said one, "what'll we give 'em for afters to-morrow?"

"Macaroni," replied his companion promptly.

So the first began to write laboriously.

"8 lb. m-a-c-k-i——"

"That's wrong," he said thoughtfully.

So he crossed it out and began again. "8 lb. m-a-k-i——"

"'Ere, mate," he said; "we'll give 'em tapioca."

"Right-ho!" agreed his friend amiably.

"8 lb. t-a-b-i——" It didn't look right. So he crossed it out and wrote: "8 lb. t-a-p-e——"

After looking a moment at the sheet, he ran his pencil through it all, and snorted:

"They'll 'ave to 'ave rice."

So he ordered: "8 lb. r-i-s-e!"

HER ONLY COMPLAINT.

"Anyone ill at home?" asked Jobson of his friend. "I saw your wife going into the doctor's this morning."

"No," said Jimson, "nobody's really ill; but my wife wants to see what's the matter with her, and I expect to get a bill for two guineas next week."

"Well, what does she suffer from?"

"In the morning she always drinks her three cups of strong coffee, and repeats the operation at dinner-time, not forgetting her pot of tea for lunch. She's very fond of eating between meals, and usually consumes about a pound of chocolate or half a cake during the day, just for exercise, while she reads the latest novel or goes through the fashion magazines.

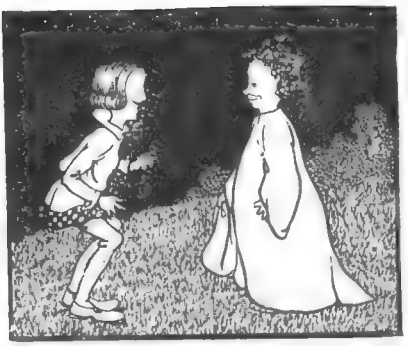
"Three nights a week she plays bridge until twelve o'clock, and never misses anything on the menu served at the close, whether the entertainment is given at our home or at a neighbour's."

"Yes, but what has she gone to the doctor for?"

"She wants to find out why she can't sleep at nights."

4. And behold, next minute a figure modestly shrouded in white did come flying into ye arms of Sir Guy.

5. "Most surelie that was a potent spelle," quoth Sir Guy, as they did step out towards ye registry office, where they were wed.



6. Then did ye ladye remove her hood, and lo! 'twas ye mayde of Ladye Jane. "Ye did choose ye wrong casement," quoth she, "and I am your blushing bride."

THE IDENTICAL SPOT.

The time was Sunday afternoon, the place a lecture hall in Hampshire.

Soon after the doors were opened, a dog entered, followed by another, and hostilities began.

"Turn those dogs out, John!" cried the parson; and John tried to obey, but did not succeed.

"They won't go, sir," said John, returning to his place.

"I'll make 'em, I warrant you!" said the parson, as he came down from the platform and went for the combatants.

By this time they were fighting quite fiercely, and the irate parson, in his energy, slipped down upon the floor, but he eventually succeeded in ejecting the intruders. Then he returned triumphantly to his place, but he had forgotten exactly where he had left off in the service.

"Where was I just now, John?" said he.

And John responded solemnly:

"On the floor, sir, a-parting the dogs."

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING.

"Confound it, Emily, where do you keep the pins? I've been looking high and low for one for ten minutes. I'll wager there isn't a pin of any sort in the house. If we men ran offices like you women——"

"Oh, Dorothy, shake out the vaccum cleaner, dear, and take a pin to papa at once."

DYING BY DEGREES.

A small child of three came weeping to her mother. On being asked what was the matter, she sobbed:

"Brother says that you and daddy's going to die soon!"

"Nonsense, darling," replied mother; "we have to get old and grey before we die."

After a short silence, the child looked up, with her eyes full of tears, and said: "Well, daddy's deaded by his ears, 'den."

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A STINGING RETORT.

There was a grim, determined look in little Jones' eye as he walked into the optician's imposing premises.

"I want a pair of glasses immediately!" he demanded. "Good strong ones!"

The assistant glanced significantly at the door labelled "Sight-testing Room," and switched on his best professional smile; then switched it off again, constrained by little Jones' manner.

"Good strong ones?" he inquired.

"Yes; strong ones!" affirmed Jones. "I was out in the country yesterday, and made a painful blunder."

"Ah!" The assistant rubbed his hands together. "Mistook a stranger for a friend, perhaps?"

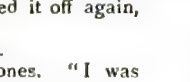
"No," came the blunt rejoinder; "mistook a bee for a violet."

A RISE TO FAME.

THE PROFESSOR'S WIFE: "The Professor is in the laboratory conducting some chemical experiments. The Professor expects to go down to posterity."

From the Laboratory: Br-r-r-r-r! Bang!

THE VISITOR: "I hope the Professor hasn't gone!"



"CARRY ON!"

MRS GRUBBINS: "Will you please tell your mother that the washing is not satisfactory?"

ARCHIE: "Muvver's away."

MRS. GRUBBINS: "Well, who does the washing when your mother's away?"

ARCHIE: "Farver and anuvver gentleman."

TRAMP: "I'm very sorry, but I shall 'ave to trouble you to get off that seat, miss."
FAIR OCCUPANT (indignantly): "Indeed! I understood the seats were free."
TRAMP: "Yes, miss; but I 'it my clay pipe 'ere just now, an' you're sittin' on it, an' I think I can smell it burnin'."

NEW-LAID.

SMALL CHILD (after studying a cow which was mooing loudly): "Mother, is that cow mooing 'cause it has laid some milk?"

MISTAKEN ZEAL.

An old Australian farmer visited his daughter, who had antimacassars on the backs of her chairs. As he was sitting by the window he spied the minister coming to visit "Jean," as she was called. As she went to answer the door, her father, not being accustomed to such finery, snatched all the antimacassars off the chairs and threw them under the table.

"Aye, Jean, lass, glad I was to get yer washing oot o' the way afore the minister came in," said the old man when the minister had gone.

WHEN THE BOYS COME HOME.

No, I've had quite enough of out-of-doors;
I think it's a beastly place.
I want to sit on an office stool;
I want to sell ribbons and lace.
I want to be anywhere warm and dry
For the rest of my days, I do;
And if you had been in the trenches, ma'am,
I reckon you'd want it, too!

M. M.

SOULFUL!

"Tell me about Spain—romantic Spain."

"Well," said the motorist, "there are a few bad places as you come down the mountains, but in the main the roads are pretty good."

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OBLIGING GIRL.

"Why had that boy so long to wait, Jane?" asked the mistress of her new servant, who had just taken in a syphon of soda-water.

"Please, mum, he waited for the bott'e," cheerily replied Jane.

"Bottle! What bottle?" asked her mistress.

"If yer please, mum, he asked if 'e could 'ave a returned empty, so I asked 'im to wait until I drawed it all off into a jug, and then I'd give 'im 'is bottle back," was the innocent and reassuring reply.

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

"My man," said the traveller, in his best manner, "is this a railway-station, or a perpetually-endowed waiting-room?"

"It's a railway-station, sir," answered the polite station-master.

"Well, then, do the trains run on rails or guesswork?" he demanded.

"On rails, sir," replied the polite station-master.

"Well, then, how is it that I've been waiting here ever since two o'clock for the 2.13 train, and it's now 5.15, and no train yet? Take a look at this time-table and at this watch, please, and tell me why!"

The polite station-master looked as requested, and then said softly:

"Because that's a weekday time-table, sir."

It was a lovely Sunday!

BROWN (calling at dentist's): "Does Mr. Gibbons see people on a Sunday?"
FOOTMAN (impressively): "Mr. Gibbons is pleased to see anyone in pain on a Sunday."

PLAIN SPEAKING.

TRAMP (at the door): "If ye please, lady——"

MRS. MUGGS (sternly): "There, that will do. I am tired of this everlasting whine of 'Lady, lady.' I am just a plain woman, and——"

TRAMP: "You are, madam, one of the plainest women I ever seen, an' one of the honestest to own up to it."

GRATITUDE.

The unloading of a great vessel was going on more or less merrily the other day, and Nick Robbins, the stevedore, was even more enthusiastic and verbose than usual.

But he overdid it, for in his eagerness to render one of the men a little vigorous assistance, he slipped, and—splash he fell into the dark waters of the dock. Down he went, and it seemed that the riverside might never be enlivened by the music of his voice again, when Jack Smithers, one of the lightermen, gallantly dived in, and brought Nick safe to land.

The long day passed, and nothing was said regarding the accident, till Jack felt that something, at least, was due to him for what he had done, and he approached Nick.

"I see yer fall in, guvnor," he said insinuatingly, "and I saved you from drownin'. Ain't it worth nothing?"

"No, you expressive example of anything but a gentleman," rasped out Nick, "it ain't! If you'd been attending to business, as you ought to have been, you wouldn't have seen me fall in!"

THE ADVANCE. THE RETREAT.

The disillusionment of a very youthful Sub, who, escorting his mother on a shopping expedition, becomes anchored to the hosiery department, and mistakes a dummy for the real thing.

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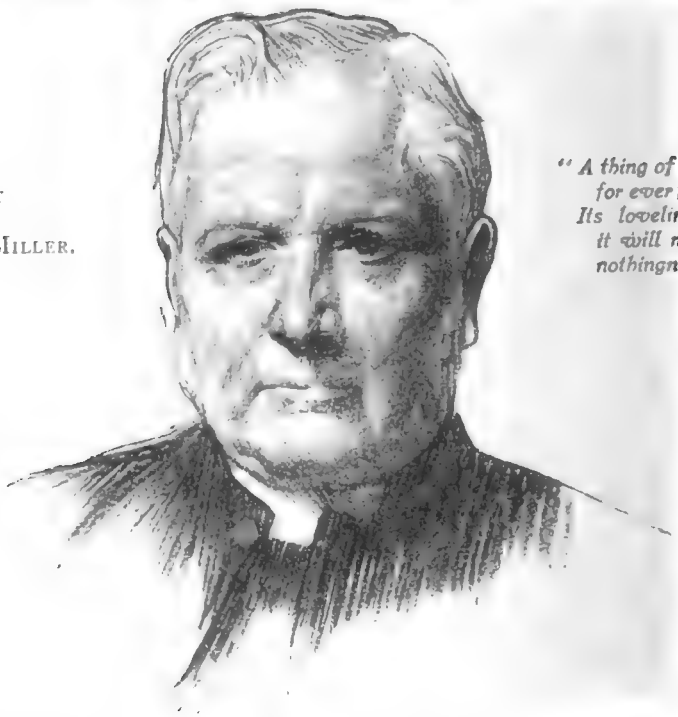
The Story of the Kang Hsi Vase

By

Laura Miller.



"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness."

It is a law of nature in the Far East that the foreigner who would remain sane and Christian must have a hobby and ride it hard. Porcelain was the Bishop's hobby. Years ago, when he first came out to China, he had begun to study it.

The knowledge of porcelain had become a sixth sense with him. The British Consul-General, himself an authority, deferred to the Bishop. So did the Peking collectors. He was a connoisseur of connoisseurs.

The pieces of his own collection he knew as he knew his children. Their number was not commensurate with his knowledge. Charity and conscience had united to make the Bishop more connoisseur than collector. The sums set aside for indulgence in his hobby were many times diverted to relieve sufferers from the floods, famines, plagues, and wars that so often devastate parts of the Celestial Empire.

Then, too, the Bishop had scruples against what might be termed tainted porcelain. As a collector he often found it a drawback to be a Bishop. After the Boxer War, for instance, he could have bought some delectable bits, almost priceless crackle and imperial yellow, but they were too obviously loot for a Churchman to purchase, and the British Consul-General got them. So it came about that the collection in the Bishop's sanctum, although extremely valuable and chosen with the rarest insight, was far from large, and every piece added to it was regarded as a precious acquisition.

Bishop Morrison's study was, like most rooms in Shanghai, airy and spacious, combining fifty years of Europe in the matter of

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furniture with cycles of Cathay in ornamentation. And, as usual—excepting, as one must, the weighty religious volumes—the fifty years of Europe were of little worth, being represented by a desk, several armchairs, and bookcases, picked up at those auctions on which residents in the Orient depend for household furnishings. Better were the cycles of Cathay, expressed here in incomparable antique porcelains.

Plates covered the walls. Above the books stood shapely vases, rice bowls, ewers, ginger jars, long-necked bottles. On the floor, rising from a carved blackwood stand, was a large trumpet-shaped vase of blue and white. Everywhere was a glow of colour, brilliant yet exquisitely soft. The indescribable odour of things Oriental pervaded the room. It was noticeable on this April morning, despite the fact that the long French windows into the garden were open.

Bishop Morrison sat at his desk, writing a letter to a troublesome red-haired missionary who could not refrain from mingling politics with his teaching of doctrine. From time to time the Bishop looked up from the epistle beneath his hand to a vase on the bookcase opposite, and a smile of pleasure illumined his gentle, unworldly face. The vase was the latest addition to his store, and was, in the words of the dealer who had picked up the expression, pigeon-fashion, from some gushing tourist, "a velly lovely sing." Very lovely it was really. Mrs. Morrison herself admitted it—Mrs. Morrison, who valued costumes above converts and position above porcelain.

"One does not have to be a connoisseur to admire that vase," Mrs. Morrison had said when she first saw it. "Anyone would know it was beautiful. Anyone," she had repeated, considering the piece with a thoughtful pucker in her forehead, as if she were thinking of some practical use to make of it.

The Bishop, at first pleased by her unwonted interest, had ended by being slightly disturbed—Martha was such an excellent manager. But a week had gone by and his treasure still stood there, delighting his eyes.

It really was lovely—a five-coloured K'ang-hsi vase. None shapelier ever came from the potter's hand. And nowhere in its perfect harmony was there a garish note; the colours had been blended lovingly by some artist of long ago. The glaze was of uniform glossy black pervaded by a dark green sheen, and against this dark background, from a base depicting greenish rocks, rose white-flowered plum trees with red-tipped buds and gnarled purplish branches, where small yellow birds perched. It was exquisite.

Sometimes the Bishop thought only of its technical perfection, and sometimes only of the design, which was like a glimpse into an enchanted garden at dusk. So, he dared to think, might a corner of the Garden of Eden have looked on the evening of its first day. Now the light fell on the vase in such a way that he discerned hitherto unsuspected graces of line and colour, and he congratulated himself again on actually being its possessor.

Three months ago he had found it in Pig Alley, that narrow, malodorous street, teeming with ragged coolies and bordered on one side by the sluggish moat beneath the grey wall of the native city, and on the other by a huddle of dingy curio shops.

When he entered the shop nothing was to be seen in the dim interior but a withered plum tree in a pot and some inferior brasses yet in the making and marked, in deference to unwary tourists, with the chop of the long-dead Mings. The dealer came forward. He was a drowsy, opium-eyed man with the smell of the drug in his soiled garments. From a recess he took out a box and disclosed the vase. It was an heirloom, he said, in the family of a Manchu nobleman who had been ruined in the recent revolution and forced to sell his treasures.

Then the bargaining began. The Bishop had enjoyed the bargaining, for the most Christian resident of the Far East picks up the Oriental custom. From the first it was evident that the vase, in spite of its presence in Pig Alley, was by no means a pearl before swine. The dealer knew its value. He named the price; the Bishop protested. The Bishop named his price; the dealer gazed at him contemptuously and whisked the vase from sight. The Bishop walked with dignity out of the shop, both he and the dealer knowing that he would return.

That was the first visit, the formal introduction to the matter. Many other visits followed, characterised by extreme indifference, now on the Bishop's part, now on the dealer's, the dealer gradually demanding less, the Bishop gradually offering more. Finally the chaffering came to an end. A price that they both knew to be the actual "last price" was agreed upon.

Then cholera of the most virulent type broke out in the southern provinces. Bishop Morrison, to whom human beings with a spark of divine soul in them were more precious than the rarest china, sent the three hundred taels (about £25) that he had saved off to the south. He was on the point of writing a chit to the British Consul-General telling him that he might have the vase when Whitney Collins, an old school friend of the Bishop's and a man of millions, walked into

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the study. And then the fairy-tale reward of the unselfish had actually been the Bishop's, and with fairy-tale immediateness. Whitney had promptly bought the vase, and had as promptly given it to his unsuspecting friend.

The Bishop smiled, recalling Whitney's words.

"When a man has only one dissipation, and that a mild indulgence in porcelain," said Whitney, "he ought to be encouraged. Of course, I bought the piece for you. I was quite feverish about keeping this out of the loot-clutching hands of the Consul-General. No, old man, you must take it; for you it's full of beauties that I should never guess or feel."

And, having delivered himself of these sentiments and subscribed a sum for the cholera victims, the Honourable Whitney Collins had boarded his yacht and sailed for London.

The Bishop's mind, having now dwelt for some time on the vase, reverted to his fiery-headed missionary. With a plea for the spreading of peace and the avoidance of politics, he closed the letter and began another one. This was to his son, Willy, a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. "My dear son," he wrote. Then he paused. The barely visible furrows in his forehead deepened and spread to his silvery hair. The Bishop was troubled about Willy, who seemed to be absorbing "small Latin and less Greek," while he played cricket endlessly, and went motoring for week-ends with Lady Somebody and her son—the Bishop never could remember the name. Martha would remember. There was Martha now; he would ask her.

Brisk steps came down the hall, and Mrs. Morrison entered the study. Handsome, energetic, well-gowned, she bustled in.

"Willis," she began immediately, "we really must decide on that gift for Lady Millington. She has entertained Willy again, this time motoring for a week-end in Kent. She evidently approves of her son's friendship for him. It seems to me most kind of her. Hadn't we better send something by the next mail?"

"Very well, my dear," agreed the Bishop, "if you wish. Only the exchequer is too low, unfortunately, to buy anything of value at present."

"Something we already have would do very well," said Mrs. Morrison.

"Yes. Perhaps one of the numerous rolls of silk with which you have been presented," suggested the Bishop.

"I am sure I have nothing suitable," returned Mrs. Morrison with an air of decision.

"That roll of Hankow velvet the Viceroy gave you?"

"Oh, dear me, no! I expect to use that for an evening wrap."

"The piece of white-and-gold brocade General Wang gave you at New Year?"

"I am keeping that for Willy's bride. Why not send Lady Millington a piece of your porcelain collection? That K'ang-hsi vase, for instance?"

The Bishop was troubled; when Martha wanted anything, the only question involved was one of time. He looked at the vase. The sunlight falling on it brought from the glaze a magical shimmer that had escaped his notice before and that now enhanced its familiar loveliness tenfold.

"Do you think she would appreciate porcelain more than a roll of silk?" he asked presently.

"Of course. She probably collects herself, although Willy has never mentioned it. I can think of nothing except the vase."

"I could much more easily part with some other piece," the Bishop suggested.

"But the vase is the one piece that an amateur would certainly recognise as unusual and beautiful," Mrs. Morrison insisted.

The Bishop sighed; Martha was such an excellent manager!

"There are many similar vases, my dear," he said, "but in the whole known world only two others of the same flawless perfection."

"Willis," returned Mrs. Morrison, "I feel quite certain that it was loot, or Mr. Collins would never have got it at that low price."

"I think not, Martha; the dealer showed me a chit of sale from the former owner and it had every appearance of being authentic."

"It is the only means we have of paying Willy's debt of hospitality," she affirmed.

"But, my dear——" the Bishop began in his calm voice.

"For a Churchman, Willis, I think you care a great deal too much for porcelain," Mrs. Morrison interrupted. "More than for your own flesh and blood," she continued, in a choked voice.

And this method of argument, manifestly feminine and unfair though it was, won the day for Mrs. Morrison.

"If you are quite certain she will appreciate it," sighed the Bishop, yielding.

He himself helped the "boy" in the packing, running his slender fingers over the faultless surface and feeling a distinct pang as the last bit of black glaze, the last white plum blossom, vanished from sight.

With succeeding days the feeling of loss grew. Whenever he looked up from the

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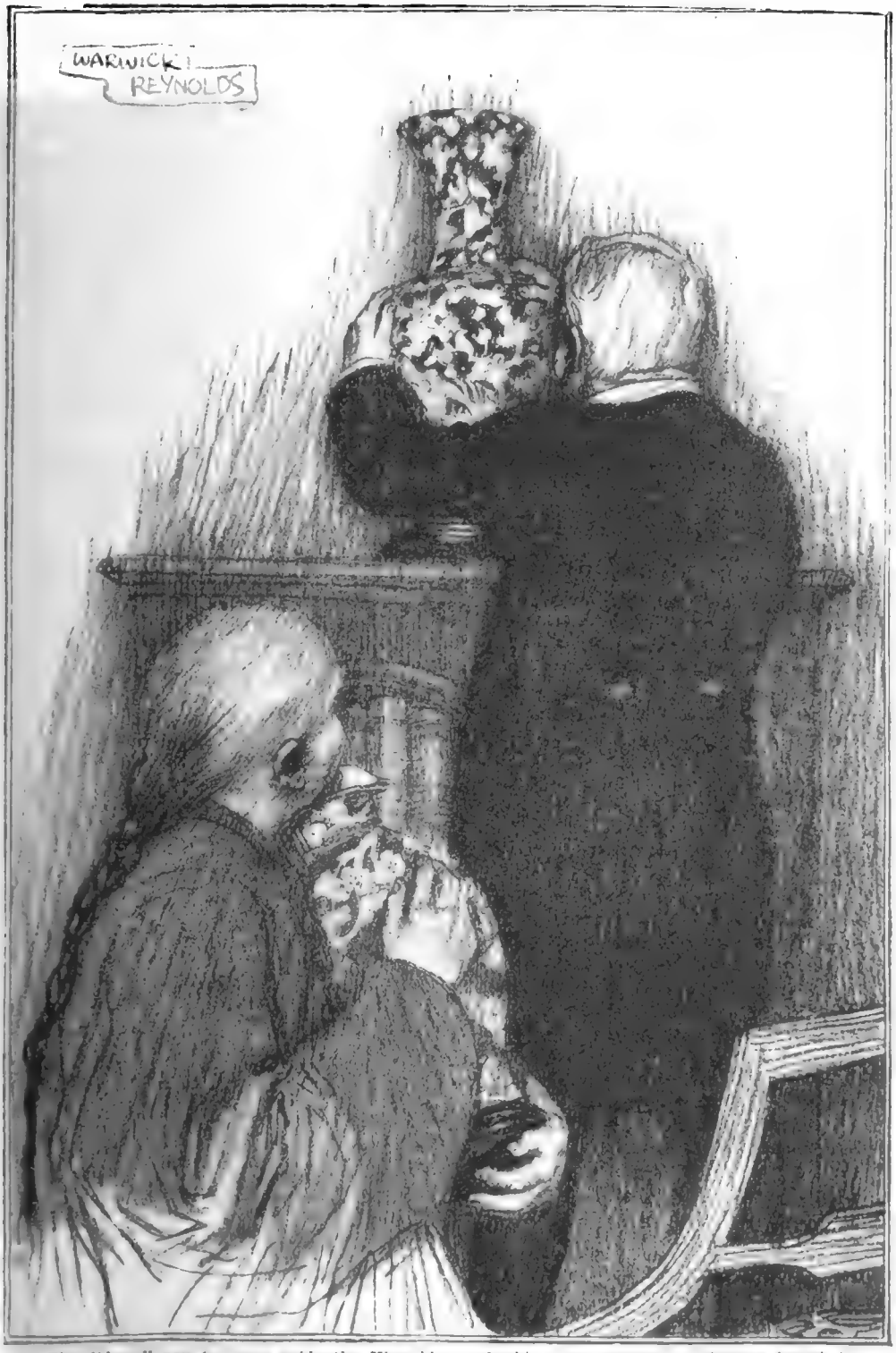

The "boy" ran to move aside the Ming blue-and-white, and, finding no place to deposit it, stood holding it in his hands; and the Bishop, his finger-tips tingling from the contact with that perfect surface . . . replaced the K'ang-hsi vase in its accustomed niche. [P. 392, *col.* 2.]

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desk to the book-shelves opposite he found himself wishing that the K'ang-hsi vase stood there rather than the Ming blue-and white that had replaced it.

Three months went by without any acknowledgment from Lady Millington. Mrs. Morrison, always punctilious herself in matters of etiquette, told the Bishop that she thought the recipient very remiss. As it happened, when the note of thanks came, she thought her yet more remiss. One morning, very much perturbed, Mrs. Morrison fluttered into the study holding an opened note in her hand.

The Bishop was writing again to the red-haired missionary, reminding him that, although there were gunboats on the Yangtsze, they were commanded by officers averse to rescuing missionaries from riots of their own fomenting. He looked up in alarm as Mrs. Morrison entered.

"Oh, Willis," she exclaimed, "such a dreadful thing has happened! Lady Millington sold the vase!"

"Sold it?" The Bishop's tone was full of reproach and inquiry.

"Yes, at a charity bazaar."

"A charity bazaar!" The Bishop's tone held a measure of indignation. He did not believe in charity bazaars—entertainments where articles of little worth sold for large sums.

"It must have brought a fabulous price," he said.

"Six guineas," murmured Mrs. Morrison.

"Six guineas!" the Bishop exclaimed. Being a Bishop, he said nothing more, but a red flush spread over his face to his silvery hair.

"Oh, Willis, isn't it too humiliating?" Mrs. Morrison read from the note: "'Knowing your great interest in all branches of charitable endeavour, I offered the vase for sale at a church bazaar. Being very like the cretonnes now in vogue, it fetched six guineas, which we considered an excellent price.'"

"Like cretonne!" The Bishop sighed, remembering that incomparable design, that glaze grateful to the touch beyond the possibilities of any woven material. He walked to a window and looked into the garden.

"Ah, well," he said resignedly, returning to his desk, "no doubt it was some very worthy cause."

"Yes," said Mrs. Morrison, "a home for blind women."

"Blind women!" said the Bishop. "Blind women!" There was, or else Mrs. Morrison fancied it, the merest shade of insinuation in his tone, all that his charitable soul could express of criticism.

"I'm very sorry, Willis, for insisting on our sending it, when it was a favourite piece of yours and almost priceless," said Mrs. Morrison tremulously.

The Bishop came and put an arm about her, patted her firm cheek, and looked at her with loving gentleness. He could lose his entire collection, if need be, but his brisk Martha must not droop.

"It doesn't matter, my dear," he said smiling. "It is, no doubt, a humorous situation if we can see it in that light."

"Do you suppose we could buy it again?" Mrs. Morrison asked. "She says the purchaser was a London dealer."

"I am afraid not, Martha. He will probably sell it for thousands of pounds," returned the Bishop.

There was a knock at the door, and the blue-gowned "boy" entered.

"Plenty letter have got," he announced, laying them on the desk.

Among the number was one from Whitney Collins. The "boy" entered again, depositing a large box in the middle of the study floor; and the Bishop read:

DEAR OLD CHAP,

How is this for a triumph over the porcelain connoisseur who said there was not another such vase in the market, and that it couldn't be one of a pair? I'm sending you the mate just as lovely, alike in every detail, from the green rocks to the little yellow birds. Found it at Christie's the other day. As a collector you may be interested to know that its cost here was £6,000 as against 300 taels for the other in Shanghai. Great sport getting it; I managed to outbid the opulent owner of South African diamond mines.

Mrs. Morrison, down on her knees, unpacked the box with a reckless disregard for the tidiness of the room; the "boy" ran to move aside the Ming blue-and-white, and, finding no place to deposit it, stood holding it in his hands; and the Bishop, his finger tips tingling from the contact with that perfect surface, his eyes glowing at the celestial beauty of form, design, and colour, replaced the K'ang-hsi vase in its accustomed niche above the sermons.

All three stepped back and looked at it.

It had not suffered. Its loveliness was even greater than the Bishop's memory of it. The rosy buds seemed about to burst into blossom, the yellow birds about to flood the warm dusk with song. And it was his now; for the first time he felt secure in its possession. Then embarrassment tempered his joy. It was, of course, doubly his, since it had been twice presented to him. He threw back his head and laughed aloud.

"And now," said the Bishop, "now I shall have to write and tell Whitney that it is the very K'ang-hsi vase he gave me once before."

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THE ELDEST.

By Edna Ferber.

"I have put my days and dreams out of mind;
Days that are over, dreams that are done."

The Trivial Round.

In all large cities there are women whose lives are as remote, as grey, as unrelated to the world about them as is the life of a sweated seamstress. Rose was one of these. An unwed woman, grown heavy about the hips and arms, as houseworking women do, though they eat but little, moving dully about the six-roomed flat, she was as much a slave as any black wench of plantation days.

There was the treadmill of endless dishes, dirtied as fast as cleansed; there were beds, and beds, and beds; gravies and soups and stews. And always the querulous voice of the sick woman in the front bedroom demanding another hot-water bottle. Rose's day was punctuated by hot-water bottles.

A spinster nearing forty, living thus, must have her memories—one precious memory, at least—or she dies. Rose had hers. She hugged it close. The trains roared by, not thirty feet from her kitchen door. Alley and yard and street sent up their noises to her. The life of Chicago's millions yelped at her heels. On Rose's face was the vague, mute look of the woman whose days are spent indoors, at sordid tasks.

At six-thirty every night that look lifted, for an hour. At six-thirty they came home—Floss, and Al and Pa—their faces stamped with the marks that come from a day spent in shop and factory. They brought with them the crumbs and husks of the day's happenings, and these they flung carelessly

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before the life-starved Rose, and she ate them gratefully.

They came in with a rush, hungry, fagged, grimed, imperious, smelling of the city. There was a slamming of doors, a banging of drawers, a clatter of tongues, quarrelling, laughter. There was a brief visit to the sick woman's room, the thin, complaining voice reciting its tale of the day's discomfort and pain, then supper.

"Guess who I served to-day?" Floss might demand.

Rose, dishing up, would pause, interested. "Who?"

"Gladys Moraine! I knew her the minute she came down the shop. I saw her last year when she was playing in *His Wives*. She's prettier off than on, I think. I served her, and the other girls were wild."

"What'd she wear?" Rose's dull face was almost animated.

"Ah, yes!" in a dreamy falsetto from Al, "what *did* she wear?"

"Oh, shut up, Al! Just a plain costume, and yet you'd notice it. And sables! And a dream of a hat."

Or perhaps Al, the eel-like, would descend from his heights to mingle a brief moment in the family talk. Al was employed by a firm of tobacconists. His was the wisdom of the snake, the weasel, and the sphinx. A strangely-silent young man, this Al, thin-lipped, smooth-cheeked, perfumed.

"Great excitement ourselves to-day. I can tell you. The Old Man's son started in to learn the retail selling end of the business."

Pa would put down his paper to stare over his reading specs at Al.

"Madison's son?"

"Yes! The Old Man wants him to learn the business from the ground up. I'll bet he'll never get higher than the first floor. To-day he went out to lunch at one and never showed up again till four."

Thus was the world brought to Rose. Her sallow cheek would show a faint hint of colour as she sipped her tea.

At six-thirty on a Monday morning in late April Rose smothered her alarm clock at the first warning snarl. She was wide-awake at once, as are those whose yesterdays, to-days, and to-morrows are all alike.

For one to whom the washerwoman's Tuesday visitation is the event of the week, and in whose bosom the errand-boy's hoarse "Groceries!" as he hurls soap and sugar on the kitchen table, arouses a wild flurry, there can be very little thrill on awakening.

Rose slept on the couch in the sitting-room. That fact in itself fixes her status in the family. This Monday morning she opened her eyes with what might be called a start if Rose were any other sort of heroine

As she got out of bed and thud-thudded across the room on her heels to shut the window she glanced out into the quiet street. Her city eyes, untrained to nature's hints, failed to notice that the scraggy, smoke-dwarfed oak that sprang, somehow, miraculously, from the mangy little garden in front of the building, had developed surprising things all over its scrawny branches overnight. But she did see that the front windows of the flat across the way were bare of the Chicago-gray lace curtains that had hung there the day before. House-cleaning! Well, most decidedly spring had come.

Rose was the household's Aurora. Following the donning of her limp and obscure garments it was Rose's daily duty to tear the silent family from its slumbers. Ma was always awake, her sick eyes fixed hopefully on the door. For fourteen years it had been the same.

"Sleeping?"

"Sleeping! I haven't closed an eye all night."

Rose had learnt not to dispute that statement.

On her way kitchenward she stopped for a sharp tattoo at the door of the room in which Pa and Al slept. A sleepy grunt of remonstrance rewarded her. She came to Floss's door, turned the knob softly, peered in. Floss was sleeping as twenty sleeps, deeply, dreamlessly, one slim, bare arm outflung, the lashes resting ever so lightly on the delicate curve of cheek.

As she lay there asleep in her disordered bedroom, her clothes strewing chair and floor, Floss's tastes, mental equipment, spiritual make-up, innermost thoughts were plainly to be read by the observer.

"Floss! Floss, dear! Quarter-to-seven!"

Floss stirred, moaned faintly, dropped off to sleep again.

Fifteen minutes later, the table set, the coffee simmering, the morning paper brought from the front door to Ma, Rose had heard none of the sounds that proclaimed the family astir—the banging of drawers, the rush of running water, the slap of slippered feet. A peep of inquiry into the depths of the coffee-pot, the gas turned to a circle of blue beads, and she was down the passage to sound the second alarm.

"Floss, you know if Al once gets into the bathroom!"

Floss sat up in bed, her eyes still closed. She made little clucking sounds with her tongue and lips, as a baby does when it

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wakes. Drugged with sleep, hair tousled, muscles sagging, at seven o'clock in the morning, the most trying hour in the day for a woman, Floss was still triumphantly pretty. She had on one of those absurd pink muslin nightgowns, artfully designed to look like *crêpe-de-Chine*.

Rose stooped, picked up a pair of silk stockings from the floor, and ran an investigating hand through to heel and toe. She plucked a soiled pink blouse off the back of a chair, eyed it critically, and tucked it under her arm with the stockings.

"Did you have a good time last night?"

Floss yawned elaborately, stretched her slim arms high above her head; then, with a desperate effort, flung back the bed-clothes, swung her legs over the side of the bed and slipped her toes into the shabby, pompomed slippers that lay on the floor.

"I say, did you have a g——"

"Oh, Lord, I don't know! I think so," snapped Floss. Temperamentally, Floss was not at her best at seven o'clock on Monday morning. Rose did not pursue the subject. She tried another tack.

"It's as mild as summer out. I see the Werners and the Burkes are house-cleaning. I thought I'd start to-day with the cupboards and drawers. You could wear your blue this morning if it was pressed."

Floss yawned again, disinterestedly, and folded her kimono about her.

"Do as you like. Only don't put things back in my cupboard so's I can't ever find 'em again. I wish you'd press that blue skirt. And wash out the *Georgette crêpe* blouse. I might need it."

The blouse, and skirt, and stockings under her arm, Rose went into the kitchen to prepare her mother's breakfast tray. Wafted back to her came the acrid odour of Pa's matutinal pipe, and the accustomed bickering between Al and Floss over the possession of the bathroom.

Between Floss and Al there existed a feud that lifted only when a third member of the family turned against either of them. Immediately they about-faced and stood united against the offender.

Pa was the first to demand breakfast. Very neat was Pa and fussy, and strangely young looking to be the husband of the grey-haired, parchment-skinned woman who lay in the front bedroom. Pa had two manias—the pictures and a passion for purchasing new and complicated household utensils—cream-whippers, egg-beaters, lemon-squeezers, silver-polishers. He haunted big shops in search of them.

There was very little talk. The energies of three of them were directed toward reaching the desk or counter in time, the energy of one toward making that accomplishment easy. The front door slammed once—that was Pa on his way; slammed again—Al. Floss rushed into the dining-room fastening the waistband of her skirt, her hat already on. Rose always had a rather special breakfast for Floss. Floss posed as being a rather special person. She always breakfasted last and late. Floss's was a fastidiousness which shrinks at badly-served food, a spotted table-cloth, or a last year's hat, while it overlooks a rent in an undergarment or the accumulated dust in a hair-brush.

Her blouse was of the thinnest. Her hair shone in waves about her delicate cheeks. She ate her orange and sipped her very special coffee, and made a little face over her egg. Then the front door slammed again—a semi-slam this time. Floss never did quite close a door. Rose followed her down the hall, shut and bolted it. The sick woman in the front bedroom had dropped into one of her fitful morning dozes. By eight o'clock the little flat was very still.

If you knew nothing about Rose, if you had not already been told that she slept on the sitting-room couch, that she was taken for granted as the family drudge; that she was in that household merely an intelligent machine that made beds, fried eggs, filled hot-water bottles, you would get a glimpse into her character from this: She was the sort of person who never had a cupboard or drawer all her own. Her few and negligible garments hung apologetically in obscure corners of cupboards dedicated to her sister's wardrobe, or her brother's, or her spruce and fussy old father's. Vague personal belongings, such as handkerchiefs, a spectacle case, a hair-brush, were found tucked away in a desk pigeon-hole, a table-drawer, or on the top shelf in the bath-room.

As she pulled the disfiguring blue gingham dust-cap over her hair now, and rolled her sleeves to her elbows, you would never have dreamt that Rose was embarking upon her great adventure. You would never have guessed that the semi-yearly cupboard cleaning was to give to Rose a thrill as delicious as it was exquisitely painful. But Rose knew. And so she teased herself, and tried not to think of the paste-board box on the shelf in the hall cupboard, under the pile of reserve blankets, and told herself that she would leave that cupboard until the last, when she would have to hurry over it.

Golden Yesterdays.

It was mid-afternoon when Rose, standing a-tiptoe on a chair, came at last to the little box on the top shelf under the bedding

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in the hall cupboard. Her hand touched the box, and closed about it. A little electric thrill vibrated through her body. She stepped down from the chair heavily, listened until her acute ear caught the sound of the sick woman's slumbrous breathing; then, box in hand, walked down the dark hall to the kitchen.

A rhubarb pie, still steaming in its dish, was cooling on the kitchen table. The dishes from the invalid's lunch-tray littered the sink. But Rose, seated on the kitchen chair, her rumpled dust-cap pushed back from her flushed, perspiring face, untied the rude bit of string that bound the old chocolate box, removed the lid slowly, and by that act was wafted magically out of the world of rhubarb pies, and kitchen chairs, and dirty dishes, into that place whose air is the breath of incense and myrrh, whose paths are rose-strewn, whose dwellings are temples dedicated to but one small god. The land is known as Love, and Rose travelled back to t on the magic rug of memory.

A family of five in a six-roomed flat must sacrifice sentiment to necessity. There is precious little space for those pressed flowers, time-yellowed gowns, and ribbon-bound packets that figured so prominently in the days of attics. That these had survived these fourteen years, and the restrictions of their owner's dwelling, tells more about this boxful of letters than could be conveyed by a battalion of adjectives.

Rose began at the top of the pile, in her orderly fashion, and read straight through to the last. It took one hour. Half of that time she was not reading. She was staring straight ahead with what is mistakenly called an unseeing look, but which actually pierces the veil of years and beholds things far, far beyond the vision of the actual eye. They were the letters of a commonplace man to a commonplace woman, written when they loved each other, and so they were touched with something of the divine. They must have been, else how could they have sustained this woman through fifteen years of drudgery? They were the only tangible foundation left of the structure of dreams she had built about this man. All the rest of her house of love had tumbled about her ears fifteen years before, but with these few remaining bricks she had erected many times since, castles and towers more exquisite and lofty and soaring than the original humble structure had ever been.

Rose had been pretty then in much the same delicate way that Floss was pretty now. They were to have been married. Rose's mother fell ill. Floss and Al were little more than babies. The marriage was put off. The illness lasted six months—a year—two years—became interminable. The breach into which Rose had stepped closed about her and became a prison. The man had waited, had grown impatient, finally rebelled. He had fled, probably to marry a less encumbered lady. Rose had gone dully on, caring for the household, the children, the sick woman. In the years that had gone by since then Rose had forgiven him his faithlessness. She only remembered that he had been wont to call her his Rosebud, his pretty flower. She only recalled the wonder of having been first in someone's thoughts—she who now was so hopelessly, so irrevocably last.

As she sat there in her kitchen, wearing her soap-stained and faded blue zephyr and the dust-cap pushed back at a rakish angle, a simpering little smile about her lips, she was really very much like the disappointed old maids you used to see so cruelly pictured in the comic valentines. These letters were her ballast, her refuge, the leavening yeast in the soggy dough of her existence. This man had wanted her to be his wife. She had found favour in his eyes. She was certain that he still thought of her sometimes, and tenderly, regretfully, as she thought of him. It helped her to live. Not only that, it made living possible.

A clock struck, a window slammed, or a street noise smote her ear sharply. Some sound startled her out of her reverie. Rose jumped, stared a moment at the letters in her lap, then hastily, almost shamefacedly, sorted them (she knew each envelope by heart), tied them, placed them in their box, and bore them down the hall. There, mounting her chair, she scrubbed the top shelf with her soapy rag, placed the box in its corner, left the hall cupboard smelling of cleanliness, with never a hint of lavender to betray its secret treasure.

The Passing of Spring.

To-night's six-thirty stampede was noticeably subdued on the part of Pa and Al. It had been a day of sudden and enervating heat, and the city had done its worst to them. Floss came in late, breathless and radiant, a large and significant paper bag in her hand. Rose, in the kitchen, was transferring the smoking supper from pot to dish. Pa, in the doorway of the sick woman's little room, had just put his fourteen-year-old question with his usual assumption of heartiness and cheer.

"Well, well! And how's the old girl to-night? Feel like getting up and eating a little supper, eh?" Al, engaged at the telephone with someone whom he addressed proprietorially as "Kid," was deep in his plans

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for the evening's diversion. Upon this accustomed scene Floss burst with havoc.

"Rose! Rose, did you iron my *Georgette crêpe?* Listen! Guess what!" All this as she was rushing down the hall, paper hat-bag still in hand. "Guess who was in the shop to-day!"

Rose, at the oven, turned a flushed and interested face toward Floss.

"Who? What's that? A hat?"

"Yes. But listen——"

"Let's see it."

Floss whipped it out of its bag defiantly. "There!"

The hat was one of those tiny, head-hugging absurdities that only the Flosses can wear. Rose, thin-lipped with disapproval, turned to her stove again.

"Well, but I had to have it. I'm going to the theatre to-night. And guess who with! Henry Sant!"

Henry Sant was the unromantic name of the commonplace man over whose fifteen-year-old letters Rose had glowed and dreamt an hour before. It was a name that had become mythical in that household—to all but one. Rose heard it spoken now with a sense of unreality. She smiled a little uncertainly, and went on stirring the flour thickening for the gravy. But she was dimly aware that something inside her had suspended action for a moment, during which moment she felt strangely light and disembodied, and that directly afterwards the thing began to work madly, so that there was a choked feeling in her chest and a hot pounding in her head.

"What's the joke?" she said, stirring the gravy in the pan.

As she sat there in her kitchen, wearing her soap-stained and faded blue zephyr . . . she was really very much like the disappointed old maids you used to see so cruelly pictured in the comic valentines.

"No joke at all! I was standing behind the counter about ten o'clock, when down the shop comes a man in a big hat, like you see in the pictures, hair a little grey at the temples, and everything, just like a cinema actor. 'Is it real?' I said to the girl by me. I hadn't got the words out of my mouth when the fellow sees me, stands stock still in the middle of the shop with his mouth open and his eyes sticking out. And that minute he took two jumps over to where I was standing, grabbed my hands and says, 'Rose! Rose!' kind of chokey.

"'Not by about twenty years,' I said. 'I'm Floss, Rose's sister. Let go my hands!'"

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Rose—a transfigured Rose, glowing, trembling, radiant—repeated vibrantly: "You said: 'I'm Floss, Rose's sister. Let go my hands!' And——?"

"He looked stunned for just a minute. His face was a scream, honestly. Then he said: 'But of course. Fifteen years. But I had always thought of her as just the same.' And he laughed a bit, ashamed, like a kid. And the whitest teeth!"

"Yes, they were—white," said Rose. "Well?"

"Well, I said, 'Won't I do instead?' 'Indeed you will!' he said. And then he told me his name, and how his wife was dead, and he had made a lot of money—fruit, or house property, or something. He talked a lot about it at lunch, but I didn't pay any attention; as long as he really has it a lot I care how——"

"At lunch?"

"Everything from grape-fruit to coffee. I didn't know it could be done in one hour. It takes money. He asked all about you, and Ma, and everything. And he kept looking at me and saying, 'It's wonderful!' I said, 'Isn't it?' but I meant the lunch. He wanted me to go driving this afternoon—motor and everything. Kept calling me Rose. It made me annoyed, and I told him how you look. He said, 'I suppose so,' and asked me to go to the theatre to-night. Listen, did you press my *Georgette?* And the blue?"

"I'll iron the blouse while you're eating. I'm not hungry. It only takes a minute. Did you say he was grey?"

"Grey? Oh, you mean—why, just here and there. Interesting, but not a bit old. And he's got that money look that makes waiters and taxi-drivers just hurry. I don't want any supper. Just a cup of tea. I haven't got enough time to dress in decently as it is."

Rose turned to her stove again. Two carmine spots had leapt suddenly to her cheeks. She served the meal in silence, and ate nothing, but that was not remarkable. She saw that Al and her father were served. Then she went back to the kitchen, and the thud of her iron was heard as she deftly fluted the ruffles of the *crêpe* blouse. Floss appeared when the meal was half eaten, her hair shining, the pink ribbons of her camisole showing under her thin kimono. She poured herself a cup of tea, and drank it in little quick, nervous gulps. She looked deliciously young and fragile and appealing, her delicate slenderness revealed by the flimsy garment she wore. Excitement and anticipation lent a glow to her eyes, colour to her cheeks. Al, glancing expertly at the ingenuousness of her artfully simple coiffure, the slim limpness of her body, her wide-eyed gaze, laughed a wise little laugh.

Floss ignored him. "Hurry up with that blouse, Rose!"

"I'm on the collar now. In a second." There was a little silence. Then: "Floss, is—is Henry going to call for you—here?"

"Yes. Did you think I was going to meet him at the corner? He said he wanted to see you, or something polite like that."

She finished her tea and vanished again. Al, too, had disappeared to begin that process from which he always emerged incredibly sleek and dapper and perfumed.

Pa stood up, yawning. "Well," he said, his manner very casual, "think I'll just drop in to the pictures."

"Don't you want to sit with Ma a minute first?" called Rose from the kitchen.

"I will when I come back. They're showing the third instalment of 'The Adventures of Aline,' and I don't want to come in in the middle of it."

He knew the selfishness of it, this furtive and sprightly old man. And because he knew it he attempted to hide his guilt under a burst of temper.

"I've been slaving all day. I guess I've got the right to a little amusement. A man works his fingers to the bone for his family, and then his own daughter nags him."

He stamped down the hall righteously, and slammed the front door.

Rose came from the kitchen, the pink blouse, warm from the iron, in one hand. She prinked out its ruffles and pleatings as she went. Floss, burnishing her nails somewhat frantically, snatched the garment from her and slipped bare arms into it. The front door bell rang, three big, determined rings. Panic fell upon the household.

"It's him!" whispered Floss, as if she could be heard in the entrance three floors below. "You'll have to go."

"I can't!" Every inch of her seemed to shrink and cower away from the thought. "I can't!" Her eyes darted to and fro like a haunted thing seeking to escape. She ran to the hall. "Al, Al, go to the door, will you?"

"Can't," came back in a thick mumble. "Shaving."

The front door bell rang again, three big, determined rings. "Rose!" hissed Floss, her tone venomous. "I can't go with my blouse undone. For heaven's sake! Go to the door!"

"I can't," repeated Rose in a kind of wail. "I—can't." And went. As she went she passed one futile, work-worn hand over her hair, plucked off her apron and tossed i

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"Say, look here, Rose. We're going to the theatre. Why don't you run and put on your hat and come with us?" . . . "No, thanks, Henry. Not to-night. You and Floss run along."
[Page 400, col. 1.]

into a corner, first wiping her flushed face with it.

Henry Sant came up the shabby stairs springily as a man of forty should. Rose stood at the door and waited for him. He stood in the doorway a moment uncertainly.

"How are you, Henry?"

His uncertainty became incredulity. Then, "Why, how are you, Rose? Didn't know you—for a minute. Well, well! It's been a long time. Let's see—ten—fourteen—about fifteen years, isn't it?"

His tone was cheerfully conversational. He really was interested mathematically. He was as sentimental in his reminiscence as if he had been calculating the lapse of time between the Chicago fire and the World's Fair.

"Fifteen," said Rose, "in May. Won't you come in? Floss'll be here in a minute."

Henry Sant came in and sat down on the couch and dabbed at his forehead. The years had been very kind to him—those same years that had treated Rose so ruthlessly. He had the look of an outdoor man; a man who has met prosperity and walked with her, and followed her pleasant ways; a man who has learnt late in life of golf and caviare and tailors, but who has adapted himself to these accessories of wealth with a minimum of friction.

"It certainly is warm for this time of year." He leant back and regarded Rose tolerantly. "Well, and how've you been? Did little sister tell you how flabbergasted I was when I saw her this morning? I'm bothered if it didn't take fifteen years off my age, just like that! I was staggered for one minute and thought it was you. She tell you?"

"Yes, she told me," said Rose.

"I hear your mother's still ill. That certainly is hard luck. And you've never married, eh?"

"Never married," echoed Rose.

And so they made conversation a little uncomfortably until there came quick, light young steps down the passage, and Floss appeared in the door, a radiant, glowing, girlish vision. Youth was in her eyes, her cheeks, on her lips. She radiated it. She was miraculously well dressed, in her knowingly simple blue serge suit, and her tiny hat, and her neat shoes and gloves.

"Ah! And how's the little girl to-night?" said Henry Sant.

Floss dimpled, flushed, smiled, swayed. "Did I keep you waiting a terribly long time?"

"No, not a bit. Rose and I were talking

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over old times, weren't we, Rose?" A kindly, clumsy thought struck him. "Say, look here, Rose. We're going to the theatre. Why don't you run and put on your hat and come with us? H'm? Come on!"

Rose smiled as a mother smiles at a child that has unknowingly hurt her. "No, thanks, Henry. Not to-night. You and Floss run along. Yes, I'll remember you to Ma. I'm sorry you can't see her. But she doesn't see anybody."

Then they were off, in a little flurry of words and laughter. From force of habit Rose's near-sighted eyes peered critically at the hang of Floss's blue skirt and the angle of the pert new hat. She stood a moment, uncertainly, after they had left. On her face was the queerest look as of one thinking, re-adjusting, struggling to arrive at a conclusion in the midst of a sudden bewilderment. She turned mechanically and went into her mother's room. She picked up the tray on the table by the bed.

"Who was that?" asked the sick woman in her ghostly, devitalised voice.

"That was Henry Sant," said Rose.

The sick woman grappled a moment with memory. "Henry Sant! Henry—oh, yes. Did he go out with Floss?"

"Yes," said Rose.

"It's cold in here," whined the sick woman.

"I'll get you a hot bottle in a minute, Ma." Rose carried the tray down the hall to the kitchen. At that moment Al emerged from his bedroom, shrugging himself into his coat. He followed Rose down the hall and watched her as she filled the bottle, and screwed it and wiped it dry.

"I'll take that in to Ma," he volunteered. He was up the hall and back in a flash. Rose had dropped into a chair at the dining-room table, and was pouring herself a cup of cold and bitter tea. Al came over to her and laid one white hand softly on her shoulder.

"Rose, lend me a couple of dollars till Saturday, will you?"

"Certainly not."

Al doused his cigarette in the dregs of a convenient teacup. He bent down and laid his powdered and pale cheek against Rose's sallow one. One arm was about her, and his hand patted her shoulder. Al had a coaxing way when he liked.

"Oh, come on, kid," he coaxed. "Don't I always pay you back? Come on! Be a sweet ol' sis I wouldn't ask you, only I've got an appointment to-night, and I couldn't get out of it. I tried."

He kissed her, and his lips were moist, and he reeked of tobacco, and th
shrugged impatiently awa fr
knew that he had won. Rose
eloquent woman; she was n
articulate one at times. If she h
would have lifted up her v
bitterly:

"Oh, God! I am a woman!
you given me all the sorrow
drudgery, and the bitterness, and
lessness of motherhood, with none
Give me back my youth! I'll
dregs at the bottom of the cup, b
me taste the sweet!"

But Rose did not talk in thi
terms. She could not ha put
the thing she was feeling even
been able to diagnose it. So wh
was: "Don't you think I ever ge
tired of slaving for a thankless lot
Well, I do! Sick and tired of
make me furious, coming round
money as if I was a bank."

But Al waited. And presently
grudgingly, wearily: "There's a d
and some small change in the cas
the second shelf in the china close
it if you must."

Al was off like a terrier. From th
came the clink of metal against me
was up the hall in a flash, without
Rose. The front door slammed
time.

Rose stirred her cold tea slowly,
on the table's edge and gazing down
amber liquid that she did not m
drink. For suddenly and comically
puckered up like a child's. Her he
down among the supper things with
crash that set the teacups and the
plates jingling, and she sobbed as
there, with great tearing, ugly so
would not be stilled, though she tried
them as does one who lives in a pa
flat.

She was not weeping for the Her
whom she had just seen. She
weeping for envy of her selfish litt
or for loneliness or weariness. S
weeping at the loss of a ghost
become dear and familiar. She was
because a packet of soiled and yel
letters on the top shelf in the hall c
was now only a packet of soiled and
old letters, food for the dust-bin. S
weeping because the spirit of sprin
had expressed itself in her only this
pitifully enough in terms of house-c
and a bundle of thumbed old love
had stirred in her for the last time.

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Photo H. J. Phepstone.

These 75,000 salmon represent a day's catch on one of the rivers of British Columbia, where the salmon fisheries are one of the chief sources of wealth.

Picture Paragraphs.

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

SOMETHING LIKE A CATCH!

THE fisherman who prides himself on his catch of a fine salmon on some Scottish loch would be astonished beyond measure at the wholesale way in which this much-prized fish is caught and handled on the rivers of British Columbia.

In a single season from 80 to 100 million salmon are taken from the waters. In the scows seen here are 75,000 salmon, which represent only one day's catch on the Fraser River. Various methods are employed for catching the fish—wheels, traps, and nets. In the former case the fish, as they come up the river to spawn, are caught in the wheels and tossed into the scows through a long wooden chute. When the scows are filled, they are towed to the canneries, where the fish is made ready for export—the greater portion of it being sent to Europe.

A PRIMITIVE SALMON-FISHING DEVICE.

A VERY different salmon-catching device from any of those used in the fisheries of British Columbia, may be seen at Awre, near the mouth of the Severn.

This apparatus consists of a series of funnel-shaped traps which are made of sticks and called "putchers."

When the tide is in, the traps are covered by 15 or 20 feet of water. The unsuspecting salmon swims in and is immediately gripped by the "putcher," which is slightly extended by the force with which the fish enters. Once in the trap, it is quite impossible for the captive to escape, so tightly is the unhappy victim held, so that when the tide ebbs, leaving the traps high and dry, all that the fisherman has to do is to pull the fish out of the "putcher."

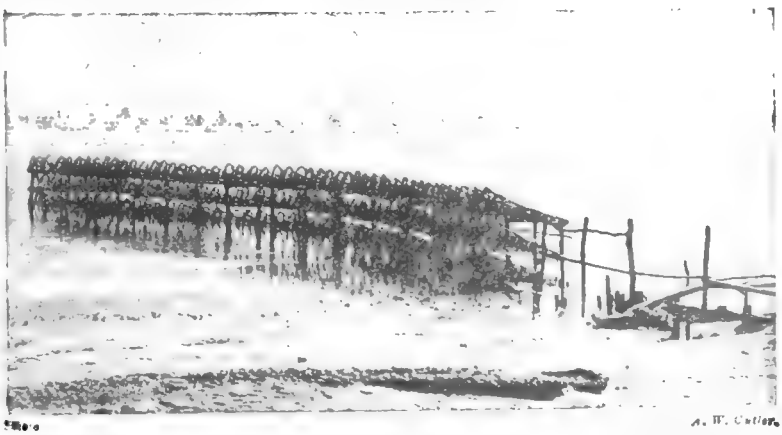

Photo A. W. Cutler.

A primitive method of salmon fishing in use at the mouth of the Severn. At high tide the contrivance is covered with water, and the fish are caught in the funnel-shaped traps and securely held until pulled out at ebb-tide by the fisherman.

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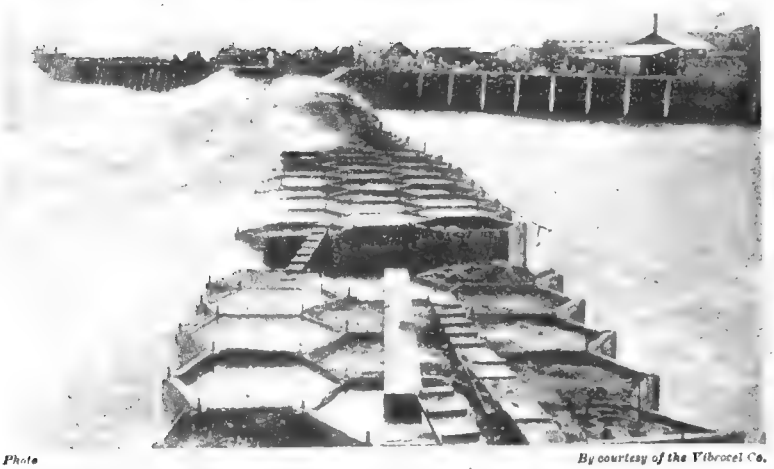

Photo *By courtesy of the Vibrocel Co.*

Monsoon waves breaking over the sea-wall while in course of construction at Bombay. The wall is a triumph of British engineering, having successfully withstood the violence of the monsoons after all previous attempts at an effective barrier had failed.

A TRIUMPH FOR BRITISH ENGINEERS.

The sea-defence wall erected at Bombay during the early part of 1914 as a protection against the ravaging effects of the monsoon seas and winds, is a fine example of the skill of British engineers.

The wall has been erected under the Vibrocel system of reinforced concrete, patented, some few years ago, throughout the world. The system enables foundations for bridge piers, lighthouses, and so on, to be easily and quickly established in almost any depth of water—an absolutely inconceivable performance prior to the discovery and perfecting of this method. Under this system the structure is composed of specially prepared concrete in hexagonal cells joined at all the angles, built in tiers three feet in depth to practically any height — the whole forming a rock-like monolith—on any flat and sheltered shore (tidal) and thence floated to any destination. These structures are closed at the base of the lowest tier, thus excluding the water.

Upon reaching their destination, the water is admitted and the structure sinks immediately on to the exact spot desired. The cost of this method of construction is incomparably low in view of the fact that heavy plant and appliances are completely dispensed with. Moreover, except for supervision, no skilled labour is required, which is a great saving of expense. In the case of the Bombay Wall, only the ordinary coolie labour was employed. Our illustration shows the wall partially completed, with the sea breaking over.

A COOL DRINK FOR A FARTHING.

It has been said of Singapore, that busy British port at the foot of the Malay Peninsula, that it is the meeting place of all nations, and in its thronged streets many quaint characters are encountered hawking all kinds of commodities and drinks.

A great favourite with the natives is the seller of cocoa-nut water—a pleasant drink which somewhat resembles cold cocoa in taste, and consists of a mixture of cocoa-nut powder and water.

Before setting out on his rounds the native mixes his beverage, and pours it into a long, hollow bamboo tube. The end of the tube is then plugged with a cork, and shouldering this quaint jug, the seller of cocoa-nut water repairs to the native quarters, where he dispenses his wares at less than a farthing a cup.

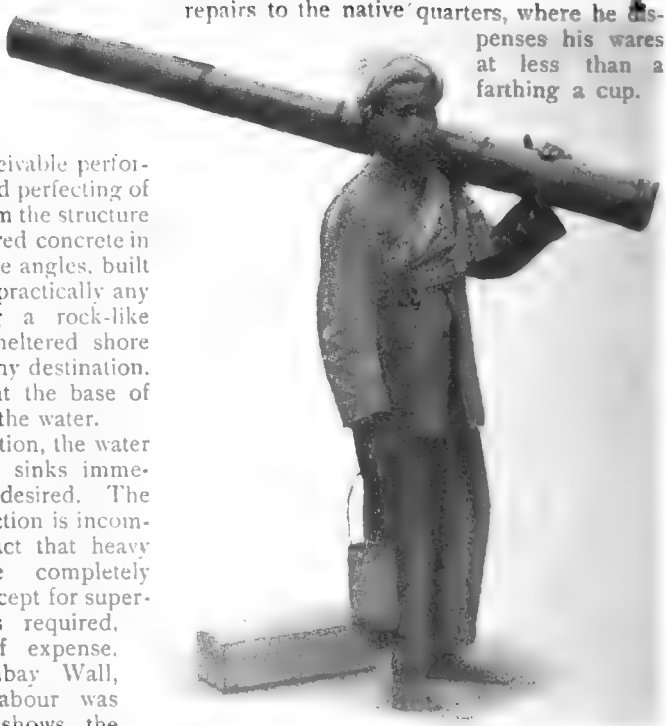

Photo *H. J. Shepstu*

The cocoa-nut water seller is in great request among the natives of Singapore, and carries his wares in the long hollow bamboo tube which rests on his shoulder.

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HOODWINKING THE CAMEL.

A PRIMITIVE method of irrigating the land is still in vogue in Egypt, namely, by means of the *sakiya*—an apparatus worked by a camel.

An endless chain of earthen jars ascending and descending a deep-sunken well, empty water continually into a wooden trough, which in turn feeds a number of small canals intersecting the surrounding land.

Photo A. W. Cutler.

A camel working the *sakiya*—a primitive method of irrigating the land in vogue in Egypt.

Very often the camel employed is blindfolded, as in this instance. This has the effect of keeping him steadily at work, as he fondly imagines that someone is behind him all the time!

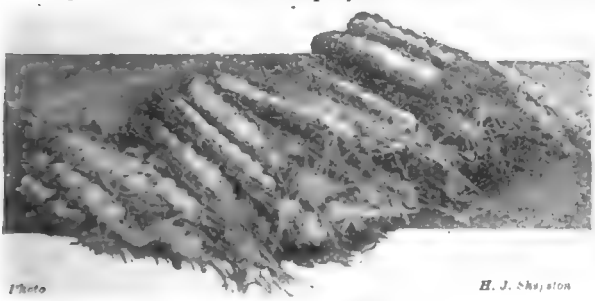

Photo H. J. Shepston

This is the Korean method of packing eggs. The straw casing is so cleverly twisted that the rolls may be picked up and slung over the shoulder without fear of the eggs falling out.

A QUAINT WAY OF PACKING EGGS.

IN many Korean towns one sees piles of eggs outside the shops, done up in straw rolls. This is the Korean method of packing eggs. There are, as a rule, ten eggs in a roll, and the straw casing is so cleverly twisted and so strongly woven that it can be moved without fear of the eggs falling out. A native will lift up a roll, place it across his shoulder, and march away, and though the roll may sway dangerously to and fro, its contents always remain intact.

THE CULBIN SANDHILLS.

CULBIN, which lies along the Moray Firth coast in Scotland, between Nairn and the mouth of the River Findhorn, is one of the most fascinating places in Great Britain, and has a very strange history.

One night in 1695 a severe sandstorm overwhelmed the district, and a sandy desert now covers what was once called "The Granary of Moray."

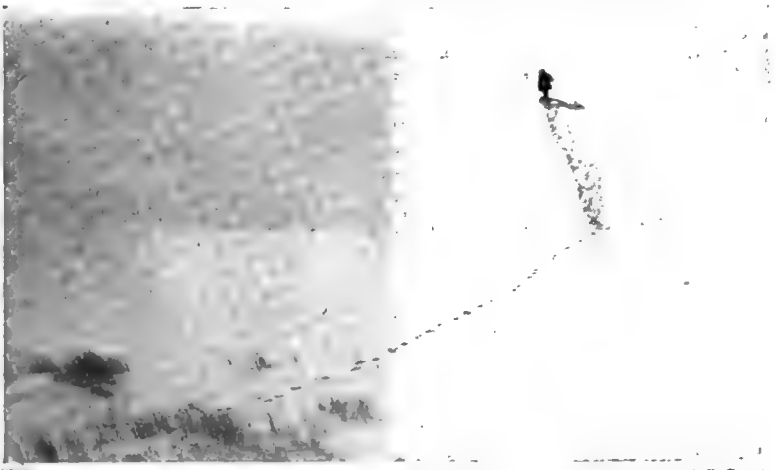

Photo A. B. Beattie.

A severe sandstorm which occurred in 1695 completely overwhelmed the estate of Culbin, on the Moray Firth, and a sandy desert extending for miles now covers the site of the manor house, sixteen farms, and a stretch of rich agricultural land.

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AMONG THE WOUNDE

By Clare Thornton.

"Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
Her snaky crest."

Young Lethbridge, lying at full length on a lounge-chair on the sun-flooded terrace, surrounded by a litter of newspapers and war-maps, looked up eagerly as he heard Renwick's quick, familiar footsteps behind him. Captain Renwick, a tall, spare man of about thirty-six, with steady blue eyes in a lantern-jawed face, and the cool, authoritative look of the soldier born and bred, came and threw himself, with a sigh of relief, into a chair beside Lethbridge's. He was in uniform, but the boy, who looked pale and worn after many months spent in hospital, wore mufti.

"Hot as blazes in London!" grumbled the elder man. "It's fine to get back here again! What have you two been doing with yourselves?"

"Your sister took me for a walk through the woods this morning," said Lethbridge. "We had tea out here this afternoon. I think she's writing letters now. I say," he jerked his close-cropped head towards the scattered newspapers on the ground, "poorish news this morning! Anything in the evening papers?"

Renwick paused in the act of filling his pipe and handed him the evening paper. He scanned the headlines, his young, thin face frowning and dispirited, then flung it down and turned to his friend with something like a groan.

"If only I could get back!" he said bitterly. "It's vile idling here." Conscious that this remark might sound uncourteous to his host, he added: "Of course, it's awfully decent of you to have me down here, Renwick! You know I'm grateful and all that! But I'm fed-up with being on the sick-list. I want to get back. I want to have another go at those devils. If I could get back with you next month——. But perhaps I shall. Did the doctor say anything to you to-day?"

For a moment Renwick pulled at his pipe. Then he took it out of his mouth an quietly:

"I've got some bad news for you, I won't beat about the bush. We kno other too well for that. It's——"

Lethbridge sat up, his hands grippi sides of the chair, his face so agonise the elder man, whose two years at the had accustomed him to the sight of suffering, both of body and of regarded him with astonished pity.

"Steady on, old chap!" he said "You've been through too much to badly. Pull yourself together!"

"You mean—I'll never be able back?" said the boy in a hoarse wh "The doctor told you?"

Renwick nodded.

"He asked me to tell you. Your you know. He said he'd dropped hint or two. There's no question of being able to go back to fight."

"But—but," the boy's face was quiv and Renwick avoided looking at it, heart'll get all right in time! A few m more . . . I'll rest, you know. any mortal thing I'm told. I must b to go back some time!"

"Never!" declared Renwick. "N doctor in the Army would pass you. got to face it."

"But I *must* go back!" The voice rose shrilly. "You don't under no one can understand! I've just *got* back! Do you hear? They've got me go back!"

Renwick's face was as expressionle ever. No doubt his experience of me taught him that too much sympathy for an unstrung man. He needs bracin

"You'll never go back," he said c "You're unfit for Active Service. Defence is your line now. Well, done your bit. You've been wou and——"

["*AMONG THE WOUNDED*" *continued over*

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A groan interrupted him. The boy had covered his face with his shaking hands.

"Oh, Lord! How can you or anyone else know what this means to me? I'll never get another chance. Never! How can I go on living? But I won't! I'll blow out my brains—I swear I will. If you knew—if you knew——"

Renwick waited stolidly until the faltering voice trailed off. Then he got up.

"I'm afraid that nothing I say can help you much," he said. "It's a bitter pill, but it's got to be swallowed somehow. Daresay you'd rather be alone for a bit. You'll come out on top all right, I know. Don't come down to dinner to-night if you'd rather not. I'll tell Olive."

Young Lethbridge got up. His face was grey and haggard, more like the face of an old man than that of a boy of twenty-one. There was a curious glitter in his eyes.

"Go in and ask your sister to come out here," he said, in a voice that told of nerves strained to breaking-point. "I've got something to tell you both. May as well get it over."

Renwick's keen eyes, that missed so little, looked at him for a moment in silence. Then he gave his characteristic nod and turned away.

A few minutes later he came back, accompanied by a very pretty, dark-haired girl of about twenty, whom he had evidently informed of the boy's trouble, for her face was eloquent of concern and sorrow. Rather hesitatingly she went to where Hugh Lethbridge was standing, but something in his set face silenced the words of sympathy on her lips. Her brother sat down and produced his inevitable pipe. She stood up. From the garden below the terrace came a delicious puff of rose-fragrant wind, the cool-sounding splash of a fountain, and the murmur of bees—peaceful sounds that seemed to mock the poignant suffering in the boy's face.

They waited for him to speak—Renwick smoking serenely, his sister in obvious embarrassment and distress. He began in a husky voice, looking at neither of them, his hands gripped together, his head bent.

"You'll want me to clear out when you've heard it all. So I'll just say thank you first. You've been so kind to me, both of you! I've never had such friends. It'll be something to remember always, our good times down here! Renwick, you were awfully decent to me when we were together in that room in the hospital at Rouen. I should have had a beastly time without you. Then when we came back to England you asked me to stay with you. As for you, Miss Renwick"—he glanced at her, the briefest glance, but her cheeks flushed rosily under it—"you've been so good to me that I—I can never thank you! You'll be sorry for all your goodness in a minute. I'm the most contemptible creature alive! I loathe myself! You'll loathe me worse when you know! It's beastly hard to tell you." He drew a quivering breath; they could see how his thin body was trembling all over. "That wound in my foot was—self-inflicted."

Renwick neither moved nor looked up. The girl's face was as white as her dress but her eyes held only infinite pity. This, however, the boy did not see, for he did not look at them. He went on brokenly:

"It was a clear case of funk. It had been my first real fight at close quarters. We'd had an awful time in the trenches the days before. My nerve was gone. We were in a wood, and there were none of the others near except a wounded man. He was one of my own men. I knew he'd die in a moment or two. I shot myself through the foot. The dying man saw me. The look in his eyes! I'll never forget it! I can't sleep at night because of it!" He shuddered, and then lifted his ghastly face to them. "You understand now why I was so keen to go back. All these months I've been telling myself it would be all right, once I got back. I'd fight like the devil! I'd make up for it! I hoped to be killed fighting. But now—now! I'm not to go back! I've got to go on living—or perhaps I ought not to go on living! Renwick, shall I write to the Colonel?—tell him the whole thing? If you can bear to speak to me, tell me what I ought to do, for heaven's sake!"

Renwick did not answer, and there was a tense silence. His sister went and bent over him, her face full of appeal.

"Oh, Jim, don't be hard on him!" she whispered. "He must have suffered horribly! I know it was a terrible thing to do, but—he's so young! And he's not a soldier, not as you are! It must have been awful for him! Won't you speak to him, Jim?"

The boy did not hear her words, but he knew that she was pleading for him. Receiving no answer from her brother she turned back, and spoke to him gently, but with a defiance that made Renwick smile a little.

"Mr. Lethbridge, I'm awfully sorry for you! But please don't think it'll make any difference to our friendship! You've been punished enough! It must have been vile for you when friends asked after your wound, and praised you! Oh, it would be inhuman of us to make it any worse for you——"

Her sweetness and generosity left him

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dim-eyed, wordless. But after he had seized her outstretched, sun-burnt little hand in a painful grip, he turned piteously to the man. It was the man's judgment, not the woman's, that mattered, though he loved the woman. So it will always be!

"You needn't say anything more to me, Renwick," he said very low. "I understand how you feel—how any man must feel. But, if you'll tell me what I ought to do!"

Renwick lifted a mildly surprised face.

"Do? My dear fellow, that's clear! Get transferred to a provisional battalion. They need officers badly."

Lethbridge gaped at him. In his sister's face bewilderment and relief conflicted together.

"It's like this," he went on reflectively, "the authorities have to be severe. They can t give 'second chances.' If it had been known what you'd done you'd have been carefully nursed back to health and then court-martialled. Yes, my dear!" he added grimly, as his sister smothered a little distressed cry, "they can't make too many allowances out there. What you and I call 'nerves' they have another name for. But a man may do what you did, Hugh, and not be altogether a coward."

"Don't try to whitewash it!" said the boy bitterly. "There was no excuse—not a shred! It was funk!"

Renwick glanced at his sister, and surprised her gazing tenderly at the boy's bent head. He addressed her.

"When I was with him in hospital, Olive, I saw how pluckily he bore pain. His wound didn't heal up quickly. There were complications. I've seen many a man who's got the Victoria Cross for 'Gallantry under fire' cry like a baby when his wounds were dressed. There's courage *and* courage. Then again, he owned up just now. That can't have been altogether child's play, we know!"

"Why, you *know* you don't need to say all this to me, Jim!" she said simply.

The boy stared at Renwick dully, incredulously.

"I don't understand!" he cried. "You talk to me, you try to make excuses for me! You don't seem to realise what a frightful thing I've done! I expected to be told to clear out at once!"

"I don't want you to clear out," said Renwick, smiling. "You must stay here till I go back to France. As for all that feuilleton-talk about writing to the Colonel—my dear boy, in your own favourite phrase, it's a wash-out! You can 'make up,' as you call it, by staying in England and drilling recruits. Punishment enough, by Jove! As for your cowardice, technically it was that, of course. But if you were what I call a coward I'd not have asked you down here. But I've studied you, and I've not been wrong. I seldom am in my judgments of men. Mind you, if you hadn't owned up this afternoon, when you knew you'd lost your chance of making good out there, I'd have sent you packing; don't mind telling you!"

"What do you say?" The boy was wide-eyed, aghast. "I don't understand! I—Renwick, what do you mean?"

The girl looked from one to the other in mystification.

"Do you remember," said Renwick, "an evening in the hospital when I woke you up and slanged you for talking in your sleep? I was afraid that the Sister or the doctor might come in and hear what you were saying."

"Oh, Jim! You knew all the time!" exclaimed his sister breathlessly.

Lethbridge turned away and sat down, his face on his hand.

"Yes, I knew, Olive," said Renwick. "At first I was merely interested from a psychological point of view. Then, strange though it may sound"—a gleam of humour lightened his face—"I got to care for the fellow! And I didn't want him to make a worse mess of things than he'd done already. So I brought you down here, Hugh. All these weeks I've known what you felt. I knew to-day that you'd own up. I'd have staked my life on it! And I was right! Heavens, what a jaw! But we'll not mention the subject again." He got up. "Think I'll go round to the garage and see if Philips has got the car going. It broke down in the drive this evening."

He walked past the chair where Lethbridge sat in a sort of stupor, and, with apparent carelessness, let his hand rest for a moment on the bowed shoulder. He was a man of magnetism, and there was more virtue in that light touch than in any words.

Then he looked at his sister, who was crying unashamedly.

"Beggar needs cheering up, Olive!" he said, and strolled away whistling.

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A RUN FOR HIS MONEY.

By T. C. Bridges.

"His was the subtle look and sly,
That, spying all, seems naught to spy."

I.

König and Hahn were their patronymics, but they called themselves King and Hart, and as they both had British naturalisation papers as well as British names, perhaps it was not the fault of the Home Secretary that they sat eating German food served by an obviously Teutonic waiter in a restaurant not a mile from Charing Cross.

Hart, stout, stumpy, and spectacled, was speaking in low guttural German.

"He said he had destroyed all his papers. And he must have done so, or the police would certainly have laid hands upon them at the time of his arrest."

King, a tall, sallow man, regarded the other scornfully.

"Destroyed them! You must think that Max Ebhardt is as big a fool as yourself or as the British police. I tell you he has hidden them. They are in a safe place known only to himself. Ebhardt knows the importance of these documents as well as you or I. The copy of the secret treaty in particular is absolutely essential to our High Command. He means to have his pay for handing it over."

"But he would have had his pay," objected Hart, frowning. "He was to get twenty thousand marks."

"And what good is twenty thousand marks to a man serving a ten-year sentence in a British convict prison?" retorted King. "The pay he wants is liberty, not gold."

Hart sat silent. A look of dismay spread over his large, pasty face.

"But that is impossible," he said at length.

"Impossible!" snapped King. "Nothing is impossible when we have our orders. Besides" — a covetous glint came into his narrow eyes—"besides, there is the money. Twenty thousand marks!"

He stopped abruptly as the waiter, a stolid, stupid-looking fellow in a greasy dress-suit, came up with a fresh course. He set the dishes down and changed the plates. As he went away King glanced after him.

"He did not hear?" he said questioningly.

Hart shrugged his thick shoulders.

"What matter if he did? He is one of us. Schlesser is sworn not to employ any who are not of the Service. Besides, look at his face. Saw you ever one with less intelligence?

"And now," he went on after a moment's pause, "let me hear what you mean. You speak of getting Ebhardt out. But he is in Moorlands, a prison from which no inmate has made good his escape for a generation past."

"But Ebhardt is not always inside the walls," returned King. "In these English prisons the men are worked in gangs on the farm or in the quarries. Ebhardt, I have ascertained, is so employed. Now do you understand?"

Hart shook his big head doubtfully.

"Even then they are heavily guarded," he objected. "In Ebhardt's case they will be particularly careful. No, I do not see how this helps matters."

"You wouldn't," snarled King angrily. "Listen!" And in low, rapid tones he proceeded to outline his scheme for the release of the arch-spy Ebhardt.

Hart listened attentively.

"Now what do you think of it?" King ended with a note of triumph in his voice.

"It—it sounds all right," Hart answered, but there was doubt in his tone.

"Sounds all right? It is all right, I tell you," King said sharply.

"But risky," said Hart uncomfortably.

"Risky—of course it's risky," snapped King. "But the risk is far more mine than yours. If you are afraid," he continued with a sneer, "say so, and I will find someone who is not such a cursed coward."

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"I am no coward," declared Hart with some show of spirit.

"Then prove it," snarled King, and cut further discussion short by rapping on the table for the waiter and the bill.

He paid the account; then, with a curt nod to his companion, passed quickly out between the rows of empty tables.

II.

Oscar Ebhardt's cell in Moorlands was exactly like that of any of the other eleven hundred and seventy occupants of the big prison. It was the same eight foot square, had the same smooth cement floor, the same sort of high, well-barred window, and its furniture—the cot, the stool, the little flap-table—were of precisely the same pattern as those in the adjoining cells.

This was one of Ebhardt's grievances. He had several, but this was the worst. It was his fixed idea that a man who had once been entitled to place the magic letters M.P. after his name was entitled to accommodation superior to that of the common or garden cracksmen with whom he was unwillingly obliged to associate.

For Ebhardt, spy and scoundrel as he was, a man who had used an intellect quite out of the common to swindle an unsuspecting electorate under the guise of a patriotic politician, was a Prussian by birth. Even though he had been found out and brought to well-merited judgment, he still fancied himself a sort of superman, and could not bring himself to realise that he was extremely lucky to have escaped being shot out of hand.

One chilly evening in late autumn he sat on his stool, reading by the light of the gas lamp set in the passage wall, when he heard steps passing up the hallway. They did not pause perceptibly, but as they passed there was suddenly flicked through the six-inch opening under the foot of the door a tiny scrap of folded paper.

For an instant the man stared in amazement, then he swooped upon it, and, superman as he thought himself, his fingers were none too steady as he unfolded the note.

The slip was no more than four inches square, and the first thing that Ebhardt saw was a letter and a numeral in the top left-hand corner. His eyes gleamed.

"Kōnig!" he muttered, and quickly read the closely-written German script beneath.

This was in cypher, but a cypher which he knew so well that he hardly needed to translate it. In English it ran thus:

"Preparations being made for your escape. Condition that you hand over the secret treaty and plans. If you agree, write answer on other side of this sheet, and hide same in remains of your loaf to-morrow morning."

Ebhardt slipped the paper inside his shirt and sat silent. There was an ugly scowl on his dark, handsome face.

"So that's the game," he muttered. "I'm to have my liberty, and Kōnig's to get the cash.

"I suppose I'll have to do it," he said at last. "Anything is better than ten years in this accursed hole."

Going to the table, he extracted from a tiny recess which had been sealed with bread paste an inch or two of blacklead from the inside of a pencil. With this he wrote his reply, then hid it and the pencil in his clothes.

Next morning the answer went down concealed in the remains of his eight-ounce loaf, and Ebhardt, after cleaning his cell according to regulation, went out for another day of monotonous labour on the "bogs."

How his message was conveyed outside the prison, or by whom, Ebhardt had no means of knowing. He took it for granted that some warder must have been heavily bribed to take it. The answer, at any rate, came promptly enough. At the same hour as on the previous evening it was slipped under the door. It was short, but to Ebhardt, sweet:

"Thursday next, or, if wet, first fine day. A diversion will be created as your party passes along the road through the Upper Plantation. Watch for the car."

Thursday! And this was Tuesday. In spite of all his swagger, the spy's heart beat hard. He did not sleep much that night, and never in his life had time dragged as it did during the next two days.

Thursday turned out dull and cheerless, but there was no rain, and the parties went out as usual. Ebhardt loathed the pick and shovel work in the black, soggy peat. Not only did he hate all forms of physical labour, but he considered such toil entirely beneath his dignity. His fellow-workmen and his warders quite appreciated the fact, and, while convict labour as a rule is not strenuous, he of all the gang was the one whom everyone took care to keep up to the mark. On this particular day things were rather worse than usual, and by the time it came to knocking off, the ex-M.P. was ready to sell his soul—let alone his hidden papers—for the chance of liberty.

The whistles were sounded, the gangs were formed up, and, with warders back and front and civil guards widely extended on

["A RUN FOR HIS MONEY" continued overleaf.]

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either flank, set out on their heavy-footed tramp back to the prison. Dark clouds lowered overhead; a chill breeze blew down over the mist-shrouded tors and moaned through the gaunt firs of the Upper Plantation.

"Wot's the matter with you?" growled his neighbour to Ebhardt. "You're breathin' like a bloomin' pig."

Before Ebhardt could reply, a horn hooted loudly and a large car came grinding up the steep slope on low gear. The line of men pulled automatically over to the left. Ebhardt's knees shook under him, for the driver, in spite of a false beard, was evidently Kōnig. What was he to do? Surely they did not expect him to bolt under the muzzles of the warders' rifles!

A man rose from the back of the car and dumped something out into the road. There was a flash, a roar; then, like magic, everything was hidden in a tremendous eruption of ink-black smoke.

It was enough. Without an instant's hesitation, Ebhardt flung himself forward, and like a flash was in the car. Before he could even drop into the seat alongside the driver, the car, which had been creeping so slowly, shot forward like a slipped greyhound.

For a moment all was suffocating darkness, punctuated by yells, shouts, and the crack of rifles. Then the car flashed clear of the wreathing clouds of inky vapour, and was racing along the open road at a pace which defied pursuit.

"*Himmel*, but that was a smart trick!" said Ebhardt. "Was that smoke bomb your idea, Kōnig?"

"'King' in this cursed country. Call me King," retorted the sallow little man as he opened his throttle a thought wider. "Look beside you," he went on rapidly. "That bag—you will find a cap and a muffler. Put them on quickly. They will do for the present."

Ebhardt obeyed. Meantime the car, driven at a tremendous pace, was flinging the miles behind her.

"Where are you going?" demanded Ebhardt. "To Taviton?"

"No," snapped King. "Taviton will already be warned by telephone. Where are the papers?"

"In London," Ebhardt answered.

"I thought so. Then we will make for Exchester. We should catch the six-thirty up."

"What about the car?"

"That is all arranged for," replied King so curtly that the other turned sulky and did not speak again. They entered Exchester by a back road, and King ran the car up a narrow street and into a lonely garage. Hart closed the gates behind them, while King sprang out, and, taking a suit-case from the tonneau, opened a door leading out of the garage into a chauffeur's room.

"Here are clothes," he said sharply. "Be quick! We have but twenty minutes to catch the train."

In other days Ebhardt had been King's superior. This new tone of command made Ebhardt furious. Yet, in spite of his anger, he could not but admire the way in which every detail of his escape had evidently been worked out beforehand. Here were clothes that fitted him perfectly, including boots, collar, and also a wig and false beard. There was shaving tackle, a hair brush, a portable lamp, and a mirror.

He shaved and changed like lightning, and with the wig and the beard, and his overcoat collar turned up high around his throat, felt certain that no one would recognise him.

The three went afoot to the station. The train was late, and there was time to get some food in the refreshment-room. Sandwiches and a whisky-and-soda put new life into Ebhardt, and he stepped into a first-class carriage with his companions as coolly as though the wires all over England were not already ringing with the news of his escape.

No one interfered, and the journey up to town was made in perfect comfort and security. Ebhardt was still sulky, and there was little conversation on the way up. But as they neared London he became uneasy.

"What about passing the barrier at Waterloo Station?" he asked.

"We don't. We get out at Vauxhall," was King's answer.

Whatever fate protected them, there was not even a policeman in sight at the Vauxhall exit, and, gaining the dark street in safety, they found a taxi.

"The address—you give it," said King in Ebhardt's ear.

Ebhardt hesitated, but only for a moment, then gave the name of a street in Pimlico, ordering him to stop at the near end.

"No nonsense, now!" warned King as, having reached their journey's end, the three made their way up a narrow street which was almost as black as a tunnel. "You'll keep between us, please."

Ebhardt gritted his teeth. He had been hoping desperately for a chance to bolt under cover of the darkness, but King seemed to read his every thought.

They reached a door. What the house was like it was impossible to say, for not a gleam of light showed from its tall front. Ebhardt tapped in a peculiar way, and after

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a short delay a key turned in the lock and the door was cautiously opened.

"Who is it?" asked a harsh voice.

A pass-word whispered by Ebhardt caused the door to swing back quickly, and he and his companions passed into a narrow hall.

"This way," said Ebhardt, and leading the others up a flight of uncarpeted stairs, he entered a room at the back of the house. Here he switched on the electric light, which showed that the place was comfortably, even luxuriously, furnished.

"Are the papers here?" demanded King, and, quiet as his manner was, Ebhardt caught an eager gleam in his eyes.

"First, what are you going to give me for them?" the latter countered.

The tall, sallow man faced him.

"None of that, Ebhardt," he said grimly. "Our share of the bargain is fulfilled. You have your liberty. Now hand over the treaty and the plans."

"What use is liberty without money?" sneered Ebhardt. "You'll give me my share of the twenty thousand."

"I'll give you fifty pounds in English money," King said coldly. "Not a penny more."

For full fifteen seconds there was dead silence. The two men faced one another, Ebhardt's handsome face working with ill-suppressed rage, King cool and watchful as ever. As for Hart, he hardly counted. He stood aside, looking supremely uncomfortable.

"And if I refuse?" said Ebhardt between set teeth.

For answer, King's hand dipped into his coat pocket. It emerged with a small pistol between the lean fingers. The plated barrel glistened under the white glare of the electrics.

"You devil!" muttered Ebhardt beneath his breath. Suddenly he turned. "All right," he said in quite a different tone. "I might have known the sort of bargain you would drive. I give in. Stay where you are and I will get them."

He went to a picture hanging above the fireplace, took it down, and pressed an invisible knob in the oak panelling. A small section of the panelling rolled back, revealing a tiny cupboard behind. Slipping his hand in, he took out a roll of papers fastened together with elastic bands.

"Here they are," he said recklessly. "Twenty thousand marks worth, and I am going to get fifty pounds for them. Hand the money over, King, hand it over. Then they are yours."

King's face expressed open contempt.

"What kind of fool do you take me for?" he retorted. "I must first see whether I am getting what I pay for."

"Please yourself," said Ebhardt, and flung the roll upon the table by which the other stood.

For an instant—an instant only—King forgot his usual caution. He seized the papers greedily. Before he could unroll them Ebhardt was upon him, and his steel-like grip descended on the other man's wrists.

"Now!" he snarled. "What about that twenty thousand?"

King's answer was a bitter curse, and a kick which, catching Ebhardt full on the shin, almost caused him to release his hold.

"Ah, would you?" screamed the latter, and next moment the two men were fighting like beasts.

Over went the table with a terrible clatter. Over went the two on top of it.

"Help, Hart! Help!" shrieked King. "Help, you fool! Hit him, can't you?"

Hart, frightfully excited and even more terrified, danced aimlessly like a bear on a chair. He was a slow-witted brute, and several precious seconds were lost before he found the poker and came back with it.

"Hit him!" cried King again, but his voice was weaker. Ebhardt had his knees on his chest.

Hart struck out blindly, clean missed Ebhardt's head, but hit him heavily over the shoulder.

Quick as thought, Ebhardt was on his feet again. With a snarl he dashed at Hart, wrenched the poker from his feeble grasp, and dropped him with one crashing blow over the head.

His eyes were red as he flung himself again on King. Before he could reach him, the latter had whipped out his revolver and sent two quick bullets across the room.

Ebhardt spun round like a top, then with a desperate effort recovered himself and hurled the poker full in King's face. King threw up his arm and saved his head, but the bone cracked like a pipe-stem. The pistol dropped from his useless hand.

"The trick's mine!" cried Ebhardt in triumph, and staggered across towards the papers which lay upon the floor where they had fallen from the overturned table.

Before he could reach them he heard the door handle turn. He spun round.

"Hands up!" came a cool English voice, and there stepped into the room a keen-faced young man with a revolver in his fist, followed by a broad-shouldered police officer.

With a last desperate effort Ebhardt dived for King's pistol. But his wound hindered

("A RUN FOR HIS MONEY" continued overleaf.)

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him, and before he could reach the weapon the young man had his foot upon it.

"Not this time, I think, Mr. Ebhardt," he remarked with a slight smile. "Pick up that roll of papers, please, Inspector. I think you will find that they are what we want."

"That's right, Mr. Dugdale," replied the Inspector with quiet satisfaction, as he pocketed the roll. "Now what about this little lot? We'll need an ambulance to take them to the station."

"Go and ring one up. I'll take charge here while you're away."

Evidently the Inspector had pretty complete faith in Mr. Dugdale's abilities, for he went without demur.

Dugdale turned to Ebhardt, who was standing, glaring at him with bloodshot eyes.

"You'd better sit down," he remarked easily, and the spy, whose knees were rocking under him, dropped feebly into the nearest chair.

Hart lay upon the floor breathing stertorously; only King remained upon his feet. He stood holding his broken arm, his wizened face drawn with pain, but still unconquered.

Dugdale regarded him thoughtfully.

"It was a bold bid, Kŏnig, but did you really think it would succeed?"

"Who gave it away?" snapped King. "Was it that?"—pointing contemptuously to Hart.

Dugdale shook his head gently.

"No, it was yourself, Kŏnig," he answered. "Restaurants are not good places in which to discuss plans for prison-breaking."

"Then it was Schlesser," snarled the little German.

Again Dugdale shook his head.

"No, it was not Schlesser. Have you forgotten the waiter?"

King started violently.

"The waiter!" He glared at Dugdale. "Who was he—not you?"

"Yes, it was I."

"B-but you heard nothing. I took care of that."

"True, but there are other ways, Kŏnig. As a matter of fact, there was a dictaphone hidden under the table, and every word you said was recorded."

King's jaw dropped. For a moment he seemed on the point of collapse. But with an effort he recovered himself.

"Then the escape?" he said thickly.

"All arranged. The Home Office gave me a free hand. The warder you thought you had bribed was acting under our orders, the warders in charge of the gang were in the know, and you were watched all the way up."

King staggered and dropped into a chair with a groan.

Dugdale watched him.

"In future, Kŏnig," he said gently, "you will not be so contemptuous of the British Secret Service."

SOCKS.

When James left Araminta's side to do his modest bit,
She waved a sopping handkerchief, and smiled to show her grit;
She wished him luck in winding up the watch upon the Rhine,
Then settled down to work at home, too busy to repine.
She learnt the art of "plain and purl," and how to turn a heel,
And while, perforce, he clung to mud, she clung to wool and steel.
So every time she sent her Jim a welcome ration-box,
He found, among the nourishment, home-knitted khaki socks.

But James had but a fickle heart—(the painful truth I tell)—
He lost the slippery organ to a pretty *demoiselle*
Who served "ze gallant Tommee" in a Fr.nch *estaminet*,
And lisped: "No spik ze Eng'eesh!" in a fascinating way.
Ah, me! She understood enough to capture James' eye!
And though he writes to England still, he's courting on the sly.
But soon he's due for leave—and then it's hey! for squalls and rocks.
For Araminta's heard it, and, my word! she'll give him socks!

Anne Page.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Matters of Importance.

THE ROYAL STANDARD.

YESTERDAY I was bearded in my den by a fair young thing, all golden hair and fur-trimmed coat, laden with amorous poems which she assured me, with a dazzling smile, were "just made for the ROYAL." I took the liberty of disputing the fact, and declining the outbursts, at which she pleaded the high cost of living, hoping thereby to soften my editorial heart.

"Penny buns are three ha'pence now, you know, and I've just had to pay 16s. 11d. for a *crêpe-de-Chine* blouse—quite a simple one, and not a patch on the one I bought in the summer for 12s. 11d."

Having refused to allow the ROYAL to suffer that she might go bravely clad, the damsel departed and left me to reflection. And the gist of my reflections was this: her resentment was not so much because of the extra four shillings as because of the inferior quality, and this fact encourages me to believe that you will receive with equanimity the news that the ROYAL is going up in price.

The advance is only a penny—very little when you consider the extra cost of printing and engraving and the scarcity of paper. The ROYAL — along with other sixpenny magazines — will now be sevenpence, but—and this is the important point—far from deteriorating, we hope to give you better value than ever.

The ROYAL standard, you may rest assured, will never be lowered. I am confident that you will rally round it in the future as you have done in the past.

A BRACE OF NAVAL BOOKS.

When you have read "Taffrail's" vivid little sketch on page 325, you will naturally, like Oliver Twist, long for more, which makes the appearance of a new shilling book by this popular naval author extremely opportune. "Minor Operations" is worthy of its illustrious predecessors, "Carry On!" and "Stand By!" I can hardly say more.

"Turret and Torpedo" is the title of a collection of tales of the Navy trade by John S. Margerison, whose stories of life afloat have been so popular in the ROYAL. They too are splendid value for a shilling.

STORIES OF THE TURF.

The February *Novel Magazine* (now on sale, price 6d.) contains the first of an excellent series of racing stories by Mr. Nat Gould, known all over the world for his first-hand knowledge of sport, breezy style, and power of vivid description.

In the "Racing Adventures of Barry Bromley," he follows the fortunes of a delightfully happy-go-lucky lover of the Turf and his magnificent horse "Suspense."

Mr. Nat Gould's popularity in the trenches is enormous. The one cry is: "Send us anything of Nat Gould's!" So please pass your copy on to the soldiers.

The crew of this bumboat, which includes a genuine bumboat girl, supply fruit and other luxuries to mine-sweepers and other vessels off the Isle of Wight.

A GENUINE BUMBOAT GIRL.

Many of you will remember a charming story, entitled "The Bumboat Girl," by Jessie Pope, which appeared in our October issue. Miss Pope's story has elicited high praise from a genuine bumboat owner who ministers to the comfort of the crews of mine-sweepers and other craft off the Isle of Wight. He is assisted by a real bumboat girl, who aids and abets him in supplying the men with apples, tobacco, chocolate, and many other comforts just as Miss Pope's heroine did.

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